

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

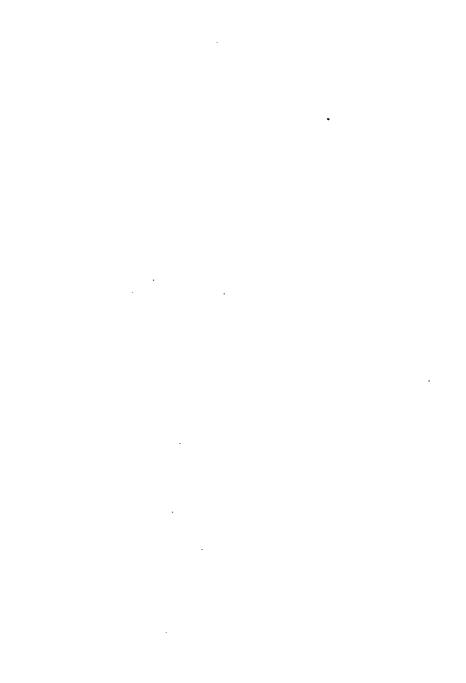
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + Refrain from automated querying Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at http://books.google.com/

Book for Boy

	•	
•		





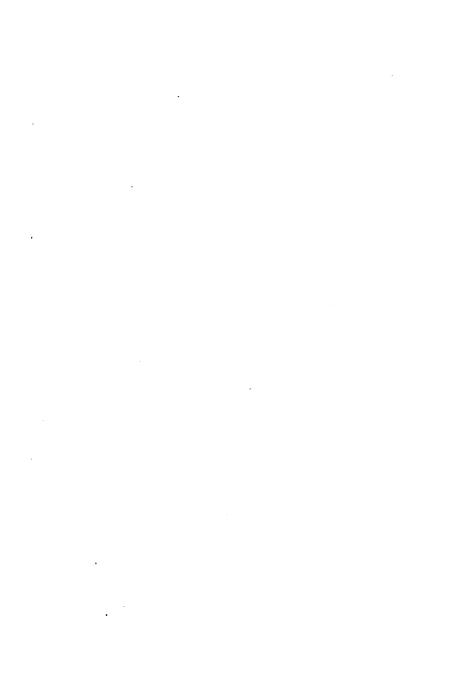
FRANK POWDERHORN BREAKFASTING OFF AN OSTRICH EGG.
Page 161





RANK AT THE HELM. Pape 182

Thomas Aelson and Sons, LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK.



A STORY OF ADVENTURE IN THE PAMPAS OF BUENOS AYRES AND IN THE WILDS OF PATAGONIA.

A Book for Boys.

By

7. SANDS,

Author of "Out of the World; or, Life in St. Kilda."

WITH 24 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM DRAWINGS BY THE

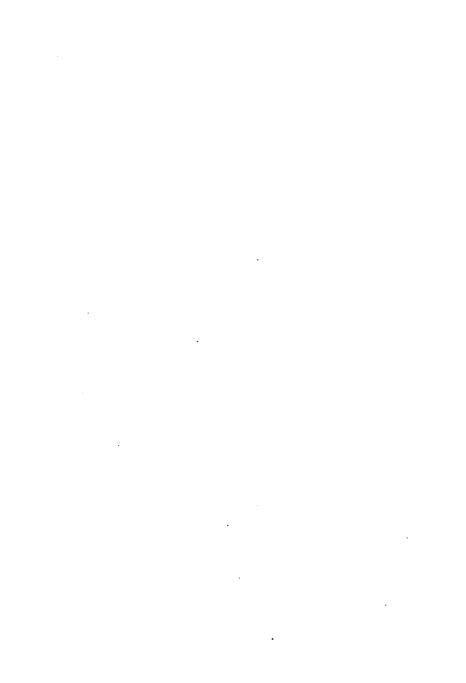
FEB 181

Mondon:

T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW. EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.

1881.

251. g. 113.



PREFATORY NOTE.

THE Author is quite aware that in the following story there are many defects, but he hopes that the fidelity of the descriptions will in some measure atone for these. It may be interesting to the naturalist, whether young or old, to know that the account given by him of Buenos Ayres is founded on personal experience, and that his remarks on the curious animals that inhabit that country are the result of careful observation. The Illustrations relating to this part of the subject have been made from sketches taken by him on the spot.

.

•

Contents.

CHAPTER I.

LIEUTERANT POWDERHORN RETIRES FROM THE SERVICE—MARRIES, AND HAS A SON NAMED FRANK, WHO IS THE HERO OF THIS BOOK— FRANK IS EDUCATED, AND GOES TO BUENOS AYRES	
CHAPTER II.	
THE PASSAGE OUT—BURIAL AT SEA—THE SHIP ARRIVES AT HER DES- TINATION; BUT THERE IS MANY A SLIP BETWEEN THE CUP AND THE LIP	
CHAPTER III.	
THE SURVIVORS OF THE CREW AND PASSENGERS LAND SAFELY IN BURNOS AYRES, BUT FALL AMONGST THIEVES—THEY RECEIVE A HOSPITABLE WELCOME FROM A SHEPHERD	
CHAPTER IV.	
MIRAGE—A SCOTCH ESTANCIERO AND PUESTERO	68
CHAPTER V.	
SCOTCHMEN IN BUENOS AYRES—TO BEGUILE THE WEARY HOURS, FRANK WRITES VERSES—A SAMPLE	86
CHAPTER VI.	
THE END OF THE SECA—THE CAMP IN A FLOOD—BULLOCK CARTS—FRANK LEAVES THE ESTANCIA	
CHAPTER VII.	
LIFE AT A PUESTO—RUNAWAY SAILORS—LETTER FROM HOME	101
CHAPTER VIII.	
SPRING—SHEEP-SHEARING AND AMUSEMENTS OF THE NATIVES—FRANK FEELS A DESIRE TO WANDER—MAKES A CANOE, AND SAILS IN A LAGUNA—CAPITAL SPORT	116

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER IX.	
FRANK IS CAPTURED AND CARRIED OFF BY INDIANS	128
CHAPTER X.	
FRANK IS GIVEN TO THE PATAGONIANS, AND IS HELD CAPTIVE BY	
CHAPTER XI.	
DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY—ITS NATURAL HISTORY—SUFFERINGS OF FRANK—KINDNESS OF GRENNOW	
CHAPTER XII.	
THE GUANACO AND OSTRICH—FRANK'S SUFFERINGS AND PLANS—HE MAKES ANOTHER CANOE, BUT UNDER GREAT DIFFICULTIES, AND SUCCEEDS IN ESCAPING.	
. CHAPTER XIII.	
PROVIDENTIAL RESCUE BY THE "LEVIATHAN"—FRANK FINDS HIS VOCATION AT LAST—LIFE IN A WHALER—"THERE SHE BLOWS"	
CHAPTER XIV.	
THE FALKLAND ISLANDS—THREE TONS OF EGGS—A DANCE WITH PENGUINS—DICK DIRTYFACE AND THE ALBATROSS—DOUBLING THE HORN—FRANK JOINS IN A WHALE HUNT—THE BOAT BITTEN IN TWO BY A REVENGEFUL COW—FRANK BECOMES A SAILOR—JUAN FERNANDEZ—DICK DIRTYFACE AND THE PAINT-POT	
CHAPTER XV.	
DIRTYFACE DESERTS—FRANK IS SENT WITH OTHERS TO SEARCH FOR HIM —HE SPRAINS HIS ANKLE, BUT FINDS A FRIEND IN NEED—A SCOTCH HERMIT AND HIS CELL	
CHAPTER XVI.	
THE STORY OF SELKIRK—THE HERMIT'S DREAMS	203
CHAPTER XVII.	
FRANE LEAVES JUAN FERNANDEZ IN THE "GUANO BIRD"—DREADFUL TEMPEST AT THE HORN, BUT A PLEASANT PASSAGE AFTERWARDS— THE SAILOR'S RETURN	218

Teist of Fllustrations.

FRANK POWDERHORN	G BREAKF	ASTING	OFF AN	OSTRICH	EGG,	rront	sproce
LIEUTENANT POWDE	RHORN,	••	••	••	••	••	26
A FLYING-FISH,	••		••	••	••		40
DRAWING WATER,	••		••	••	••	••	60
SHEATH-KNIFE,	••			••	••	••	67
THE OWL THAT LIVE	S IN THE	BISCAC	HA BURR	ows,	••		85
AN OLD GAUCHO,	••			••	••	••	93
IN THE MIDST OF A	HURRICA	NE,		••	••	••	94
THE ALOE,			••	••	••	••	100
A FATAL ENCOUNTER			·		••		114
HORSE, WITH NATIVI	SADDLE,	LASSO,	ETC.,	••	••	••	115
BISCACHA,	••		••	••	••	••	127
CAPTURED BY INDIA	NS,	••	••	••	••		130
GRENNOW-AGED SIX	TEEN,	••	••	••	••		136
GAUCHO BOY,			••	••	••	••	146
FRANK'S TENT IN PA	TAGONIA,		••	••	••	••	158
PELUDO, OR HAIRY	ARMADILI	ю,			••		168
A SHIP IN SIGHT,	••	••	••	••	••		164
CAPTAIN SNATCHBLO	CK,		••		••		178
FRANK AT THE WHE	EL,	••	••	••	••		188
A FRIEND IN NEED,		••	••	••	••	••	194
JOHN DAVIDSON, JUA	AN FERNA	NDEZ,		••	••	••	202
GOAT,							217
TIPHTPNANT POWNE	BEODN TA	KING A	M OBSERV	ZATTON			231



CHAPTER I.

LIEUTENANT POWDERHORN RETIRES FROM THE SERVICE—MARRIES, AND HAS A SON NAMED FRANK, WHO IS THE HERO OF THIS BOOK--FRANK IS EDUCATED, AND GOES TO BUENOS AYRES.

BOUT a mile from the small town of Sandyport, on the east coast of Scotland, upon a level piece of ground

close to the sea, there stands in the midst of a garden a cottage which any stranger who happens to pass that way may see at a glance is the residence of a sailor, and one who has served in the Royal Navy. The house is of modest dimensions, but neat and clean. The entrance to the garden, which is at the side, is through an arch made of the jawbone of a whale. In one corner the half of a boat, with the keel upwards, serves for a summer-house. A figure of Fame, about nine feet in height, which had originally ornamented the head of some gallant but unfortunate vessel, is bolted to the north wall between two apple-trees. Although she has lost her nose, and had her trumpet knocked into her eye by an accident, she has still some attractions, and few pass the cottage without stopping to look at her. On the smooth grass plot at the end of the house is a flag-staff, rigged like the mast of a cutter, with cross-trees, top-mast, gaff, stays, and halliards, all ship-shape. The gravel walk is fenced with net-work; and a wooden grating lies before the rustic porch, which shields the door from the cold blasts that sweep in winter across the North Sea.

Some might consider the situation of the cottage lonely, as not a house stands near it on the bleak links or downs that stretch to a considerable distance on three sides, and a sandy shore with the blue sea beyond lies in front. To the right in the distance you see the quaint, old town of Sandyport, with its ancient church

tower and gable-fronted houses, and the masts of brigs and schooners rising above the pier, which is terminated by a small light-house. To the left no house is visible, excepting a hut used by salmon fishers, whose stake-nets run down a wide expanse of sand until they reach low water. A few farm-houses, half hid in groups of trees, appear upon the rising ground inland.

This cottage is the residence of Horatio Nelson Powderhorn, who had been for many years a lieutenant in the navy. To him, after the storms of life, it is by no means lonely, but a perfect haven of rest. When he left the service, "although not clean past his youth, yet he had some smack of age in him—a little relish of the saltness of time." His face still looked fresh, and his square-built figure remained strong and active enough; but his hair was turning gray, and he had attained that period of life and frame of mind (which last for about twenty years) when a man can look tranquilly forward to spending the residue of life's little span in a single condition—busied

cantering about on hobby-horses which matrimony might indeed be apt to upset.

He retired to this cottage (which had been left him by his grandfather, also an old sailor) with the intention of remaining a bachelor for life, and engaged an old woman called Betty Fullarton to act as housekeeper. He passed the time happily in walking fore and aft on the smooth turf outside the garden wall, watching through a spy-glass the manœuvres of the vessels in the offing, in smoking, reading, and looking at charts in his summer-house, and in cultivating his garden. At noon he frequently brought out his quadrant and took a solar observation. On rare occasions, such as pay-day, he would give a little party to his agricultural neighbours, with whom he was on friendly terms, although their society was by no means congenial, as the only topic of conversation in which they felt a common interest was the weather. The Union Jack at the truck of the flag-staff was the signal by which he used to let his neighbours know that he would be happy if they would come down and spend an hour

with him. The invitation was readily accepted, although both parties on first meeting found a difficulty in selecting subjects to talk about. The farmer would politely introduce ships, and the sailor would speak of cattle; but if either was tempted to enlarge on the theme suggested, the other could not help showing his utter want of sympathy. The farmer would listen to the lieutenant's yarns with vacant eye and hanging nether lip, and the latter would turn fidgety when the former talked of crops and manures. But a little hospitality made conversation easy, and each discoursed on the subject in which he himself felt the deepest interest, indifferent whether he was listened to or not.

Betty Fullarton, who sat with pursed mouth and blinking eyes in the kitchen, keeping the kettle boiling, was often puzzled to make out, when the voices grew loud, what they were all talking about; nor is it surprising she felt perplexed, when the following is a fair sample of what she heard:—

"I remember, when I was on board of the

Black-eyed Susan, we were running along closehauled on the starboard tack—when she choked on a turnip; but I took the butt-end of my whip and rammed it down her throat—but the wind increased to a gale, accompanied by heavy showers of-Dalmahoys, about nine tons to the acre—her bow, you see, lay this way on the reef, so to ease her I cut away the mizzen-mast, the main and fore top-masts, and lowered the main and fore yards. The sea was running very high at the time—but I gave it a good top-dressing of dissolved bones and nitrate of potash, and as fine a crop of clover came up as you ever saw-I ordered the crew into the boats—and fed them on linseed cake and turnips for six weeks, and sold them for £27 a head, for they were bonnie beasts. I bought them at Falkirk for £20—when the gale abated, and we sighted land to the northeast, we set the sprit-sail and jib-but boiled food is very bad, whatever some may say to the contrary, and there is nothing better than oat, barley, or wheat straw, along with three feeds of corn and half a bushel of bears—at the same

time a number of the natives came down the beach to meet us, and by signs, for I did not know a word of their language, I explained to them that we had lost our ship, but if they would let us land and give us a supply of provisions and water, the great Queen of our country would take care to reward them. Well (after some time), one who seemed to be a chief, and two officers with him, sticking their spears into the ground, stepped forward, when—I gave them a dip of Campbell's composition, and rubbed them well with tobacco juice and spirits of tar, which completely cured them, and the fleeces were soft and sappy at clipping time," etc., etc. "Strange that men should put that into their mouths which taketh away their brains!"

Lieutenant Powderhorn had only occupied the cottage for a few months when Mary, the eldest daughter of the parish minister, took a great fancy for conchology, and was often to be seen gathering shells on the beach there. At first the old sailor merely cast a careless glance at her; but when he had seen her two or three times, he began to think she was a remarkably comely young woman—not so very young either, although a good deal younger than himself-with clear blue eyes and an agreeable manner. In a few months a paragraph appeared in the local newspaper to this effect: "At Sandyport on the 16th inst., by the father of the bride, assisted by the Rev. Donald Bane, Lieutenant Horatio Nelson Powderhorn, R.N., to Mary, daughter of the Rev. David Dall, M.A. No cards." It is curious that the lady after this event gave up conchology, although she had a better opportunity than ever of collecting specimens. The union proved a happy one for both parties; nor did any one express the least disapprobation except Betty Fullarton, who could not submit to serve where she had been accustomed to rule, but left the house with her trunk, muttering, "What daft notions folk tak' in their heads," and, "there's nae fule like an auld fule." But the lieutenant now wondered that he had been contented with his former condition.

In less than a twelvemonth another notice

appeared in the newspaper in these words: "At Seabank Cottage, on the 27th inst., the wife of Lieutenant Powderhorn of a son."

This boy was duly baptized Frank, and grew up until he was ready for the school in Sandyport. As he was an only child, his parents had ample leisure to superintend his education; but he did not show any great ability. Yet when he had learned to read he became very fond of books, especially books of voyages and travels; and he was equally fond of listening to his father's yarns about the sea and the strange countries he had seen. Like all boys who are brought up on the coast, he soon took a great interest in ships, and acquired such a knowledge of the names and uses of every part of their complicated structure as no lad bred inland can possibly attain. He spent not a few of his leisure hours in making models of vessels in the old boat which his father used as a summer-house, and which contained a bench and some carpenter's tools; and like other boys, he felt much pleasure in the long summer evenings in clambering up the

rigging of the ships in the harbour of Sandyport, and in putting his cap on the truck of the loftiest masts.

It would occasionally happen that the skipper or mate of a vessel, on whose absence Frank and his companions had calculated, would tumble on board whilst the boys were practising these dangerous exercises aloft. When they saw him fill half a dozen buckets with sea-water and stand them in a row on the deck, they knew too well what his intentions were. He would then hail them thus: "Ahoy, you fellows on the fore-top-sail-yard! come down! You want to learn to be sailors, do you? Come down and I'll give you a lesson. Sailors must not be frightened at salt water, you know. We often get our jackets wet; so take that! and that! and that! (dashing the water all over them): but as you may catch cold from not being used to it, maybe it will be as well to warm your skins with a rope's end; so there! and there! you young rascals."

At the age of fifteen Frank had grown a

tall, slim lad, with good features, blue eyes, and fair curly hair. But although thin he was by no means weak, and could beat all his companions at putting the stone, or leaping, or running. His father chanced to look at him one day, and exclaimed, as if the idea had never struck him before, "Why, Frank, what a tall fellow you are growing! it is about time you were thinking what profession you are to be. Have you ever thought about it?"

"Yes, father, I have often thought of it, and I should like to be a sailor."

"Well, my boy, I should approve of your choice if promotion were not so slow in the navy; but as you will have no influence at the admiralty, you would have nothing better to hope for than spending the best part of your life in the service of your country, and retiring, like myself, when 'declined into the vale of years,' a poor lieutenant. And as for the merchant service, pshaw! I should be sorry to see a son of mine obliged to brush the boots of some low dog of a skipper, and carry the

duff from the galley to his dinner. The sea will never do! But take time to consider. How would you like to be a lawyer?"

- "I'd rather be a sawyer," answered Frank.
- "Or a merchant?"
- "Well, father, if you mean a travelling merchant with a pack, I think I would like it very well."
- "O Frank! don't talk of the subject in that frivolous way. I assure you a very heavy responsibility rests upon your shoulders; the choice of a profession is a very serious matter. It is like the sand-stroke of a clinker built boat, and all your future life will take its shape from that. But don't distress yourself; take time to consider the matter calmly, and we will talk about it again."

Frank, who was anxious to please his parents as well as to get on in the world himself, did consider the subject often and long, indeed, did nothing else but brood upon it, until he grew perplexed and dejected. If any one is deserving of pity it is surely a poor lad who, without any experience of the world, or

any decided bent, is called upon to choose a profession which may be to him the road to life-long weal or woe. Frank now felt no more interest in the school; and with his father's consent he left it, and took to wandering about the country, often walking as much as forty miles in a day. He felt great pleasure in these peregrinations, although the enjoyment was marred by the thought that always floated uppermost in his mind, "What business shall I be?"

Whilst Frank was in this perplexed and unsettled condition, his grandfather, the minister, called with a letter which one of his parishioners had just received from his son, who had gone to Buenos Ayres two years before.

"I have been thinking," said the reverend gentleman, "that Frank might do worse than try his fortune there—might do much worse. It seems an excellent field for young men who have little or no capital—an excellent field. The free life would suit Frank; and he may succeed just as well as young Swingtrees—

just as well—who, I am glad to see, has found a country at last where he can make money; for he did not prosper in California, nor in Australia, nor did he make a penny—not a penny—in New Zealand or Fiji."

"Please read the letter," said the lieutenant; and the minister, putting on his spectacles, and coughing to clear his throat, read as follows:—

"Dear Father,—I duly received your kind letter containing draft for £20, for which I beg to thank you, and promise faithfully to repay whenever my wool is sold. I was sorry to hear that your crops were a failure last year. As for myself, I was never so prosperous in my life. I have a good house and large garden, or quinta, as we call it here, in which I grow potatoes, maize, and melons; and a monte, or orchard, of peach, quince, and figtrees. I keep six riding-horses and take charge of a flock of sheep. One-third of the flock I have got to myself for looking after the whole. This is called the terceiro system. My share is about 666. As sheep by natural

increase double their number every second year, in two years hence I shall own 1332! and in four years 2664!! and in six years 5328!!! and in eight years (which will soon pass) 10,656!!!! so that with a little patience I shall be certain to make a fortune. In the meantime I have the wool of my 666 to keep me in biscuits, yerba, and tobacco, &c. Besides, my prospects are so good, that I can get as much credit as I want at the almacen and pulperia. Wool is worth 12s. 6d. the arroba at present. For the wool alone I shall receive £266, 8s.—I mean in eight years after this.

"I take as much mutton as I require out of the flock. There is an inexhaustible supply of coal (called bosta) in the sheep-pens. My prospects, in short, were never so brilliant as they are at present. I have a great desire to see you settled upon a piece of land of your own, where you will have no rent to pay; and if you hear of any good farm for sale, I hope you will let me know of it. I trust this will find my mother and yourself in the enjoyment of that greatest of blessings, good health, and

that your crops will be better this year.—I am your affectionate son,

"Thomas Swingtrees.

"P.S.—Please send me a suit of good tweed clothes, as my trousers are all in rags, and I am obliged to wear an old chiripa instead, which does well enough in week days; but I always like to be decently dressed on Sunday, even although there be no one but the horses and sheep to see me. Don't forget to send the account along with them. A suit of tweeds costs eight pounds here, and I must study economy for a year or two. I shall remit the price along with the twenty pounds whenever the sheep are clipped, without fail.

"T. S."

"What do you think of it?" said Mr. Dall, when he had finished reading the letter.

"Well, I daresay the young man is writing the truth," answered Lieutenant Powderhorn, "although I cannot understand why, if he is in such a prosperous condition as he describes, he should require to send to his father for money and clothes. However, Buenos Ayres, according to all accounts, is a very fine country for energetic young men."

"Is it not possible," said Mrs. Powderhorn, with a tear in her eye, "to find employment for my dear boy in some place nearer home? It would grieve me to part with him; although, if there be no alternative, I would not allow my affection to injure his prospects."

"We had better consult Frank himself," said the lieutenant; "and if he wishes to go, I will try and raise the money to send him out in a respectable way."

Frank was consulted accordingly, and expressed his enthusiastic desire to try his fortune in Buenos Ayres—in fact, once the subject was broached, he could neither think nor talk of anything else. At times his heart would come into his mouth at the thought of leaving home; but when he reflected on the large sums of money he would make, and the handsome gifts he would be able to send his parents, and the pleasant life he would lead in riding about all day on horseback and seeing

new things and new places, his courage rose again, and he was eager to be off.

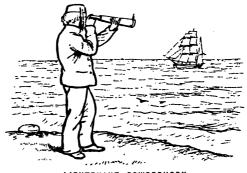
His kind father gave him some "lengthened sage advices," such as to keep out of evil company, and above all things to beware of drink, which was the ruin of so many. Intoxicating liquors, he had heard, were very cheap in Buenos Ayres, and the temptation to use them was, from the heat of the climate and the lonely life which men were obliged to lead, much greater than at home; he therefore recommended his son to become a total abstainer. He also counselled him not to indulge in tobacco, which was a useless and expensive habit, destructive to digestion and injurious to the constitution. He himself wished he had never learned to smoke (although he never used more than four ounces of niggerhead a week), and he was determined to give it up some day. Here he filled his pipe, and advised Frank when he felt depressed or weary to read a few pages of a good book.

It is customary in stories of this kind to make the young hero fall in love with some

pretty girl, whom, after he has gone through infinite disasters, he returns and marries. will be impossible in this tale, which is all founded on fact, to follow that custom, as Frank never showed a marked predilection for any girl,-indeed, the one he was most familiar with (namely, Bella Daisy, whose father was a surgeon) he used to tease and torment the This was the more extraordinary as she was a pretty little girl, only a year or two younger than himself. She had only one fault, and that was speaking with a lisp, which she called "lithp," and some people thought that was no fault at all; yet Frank, the tasteless fellow, seemed to feel quite a pleasure in provoking and annoying her, and she would follow him wherever he went to tell him that she hated him.

A chest of good clothes, including two pairs of hob-nailed boots and other articles suitable for a warm climate and life on horseback, were purchased for Frank, and a cabin passage, which cost twenty pounds, was taken for him in the barque *Porpoise*, five hundred tons,

Captain Lee Scuppers, commander, then on the berth at Glasgow for Buenos Ayres. He also got twenty pounds in his pocket; and on the 5th of October he kissed his mother and rushed out of the house and into the cab that waited to take him to the station. There, to his surprise, he saw Bella Daisy and her friend Mary Buttercup, who had come to bid him good-bye. Bella gave him a small book for holding postage stamps, and said, "I thay, Frank, I don't hate you; it wath only a joke. Good-bye." His father went with him, and waited on the pier at Greenock on the afternoon of the 6th until the *Porpoise*, in tow of a steamer, went out of sight.



LIEUTENANT POWDERHORN

CHAPTER II.

THE PASSAGE OUT—BURIAL AT SEA—THE SHIP ARRIVES AT HER DESTINATION;
BUT THERE IS MANY A SLIP BETWEEN THE CUP AND THE LIP.



RANK had two fellow-passengers named Cockerel and Binks, also youths going out to make their for-

tunes. All three fraternized immediately on meeting, and expatiated in buoyant spirits on the glorious country they were bound for, and the delightful life they would lead on horse-back. Cockerel had read all about the river Plate, and although well aware of the insecurity of life and property there, felt nothing daunted. But he had taken every precaution to guard against the dangers he knew he would have to encounter, and was armed to the teeth: he was provided with several long knives to carry in his belt, besides two revolvers, a rifle, and a shot-gun. He had had no practice in

riding, but having brought a saddle with him, he girthed it on the mizzen-boom, and put himself in training for the pampas, as the plains of Buenos Ayres are called. This he did before he had been many hours in the ship, to the no small diversion of the sailors, who were still more delighted when the saddle turned upside down and threw him on deck.

The weather remained mild until the 10th. when a gale arose which lasted for a week. The canvas was reduced to fore and main top sails, and these reefed, and the mizzen and fore stay-sail, and yet the barque lay over with her lee-bulwarks buried in foam. Great seas swept over the weather side and deluged the deck. The seamen, dressed in sou'-westers and oilskin coats glittering with wet, hurried along with their feet wide apart, and clutched as they went at lines and belaying pins. The cabin, which was in the poop, was ankle-deep in water; and the sleeping-rooms on the lee-side were flooded, whilst pieces of wood dashed about from side to side. Everything was the picture of discomfort: but Frank and his fellowtravellers were quite unconscious of it, as all three lay in the agony of sea-sickness. About midnight on the 10th a huge wave broke on the poop and smashed in the sky-light and extinguished the light, and fell into the cabin like a cataract. They heard it, but they heeded not. It mattered not to them what happened.

It was an anxious time for Captain Scuppers, a tall, red-faced, red-whiskered man, who got little or no sleep for nearly a week. He might be seen stepping into the cabin at night, dressed in oilskins, and examining the barometer with thoughtful face, or roaring to the carpenter (who had never been at sea before and was very sick) in this fashion, "Turn out, you lubber! I would as soon have an old woman for a carpenter as you. Here's the ship drowned with water above and below, and the pumps choked, and you taking your ease in bed. You know as well as I do that the ship is overloaded and in a dangerous condition, and yet you lie groaning there. Turn out, I say!"

When the *Porpoise* reached the Bay of Biscay the gale abated, although the sea still con-

tinued very high. The top-gallant-sails and stay-sails were set, and during the operation a young man fell from the yard and was killed on the deck. He was a Brazilian, who, with the view of getting a passage home, had shipped as an ordinary seaman, although he had been a blacksmith. This imposition caused him to be much persecuted, not only by the officers, but by the seamen.

He was buried in the deep early next morning, just as the blood-red sun arose amongst the black and broken clouds. The body, wrapped in canvas, was laid upon a plank, one end of which rested on the rail in the waist of the ship; a bag of coals was tied to the booted feet; and the red ensign was used as a pall. The skipper muttered a prayer, and the end of the plank being tilted up, the corpse slid off and plunged into the sea. His chest was brought on deck; but on being opened was found to contain nothing but a few rags and a long lock of black hair.

The weather grew delightfully mild, and on the 22nd the ship got into the trade winds, and the studding-sails and stay-sails were set. In lat. 24° N. large numbers of flying-fish were seen; and Frank, although he had often read about them, was surprised at the length of their flight, which must be fully two hundred yards. Their wing-like fins glitter with all the colours of the rainbow as they rise in shoals out of one long wave and dart away with many a graceful curve until they plunge into another wave.

"O happy living things! no tongue Their beauty can declare."

The sun rose higher and higher every day, until it stood right overhead, and Frank was amused to see that, like Peter Schlemil, he was losing his shadow, which had diminished to the size of a platter, and lay between his feet. The heat grew intense, and all on board laid aside their coats and shoes. The seams of the deck began to gape, and had to be recalked.

On the 1st of November the *Porpoise* had reached the belt which sailors call the "Doldrums" and the "Variables." Dead calms alternating with sudden squalls, accompanied

by sickly and oppressive heat, characterize these latitudes. The prevailing gloom is occasionally broken by a shout of, "Haul down the mizzen stay-sail—luff—let go the top-gallanthalliards;" by the hurried trampling of feet, a rushing of water over the bulwarks, the crash of crockery, and the maledictions of the steward. Anon the ship begins to roll again, the sails to flap, the ropes to squeak through the blocks, and the chains to rattle against the masts. Every one feels irritable and ready to quarrel; the three passengers, who had been on the most cordial terms, fall to fisticuffs on the quarterdeck, but are interrupted by Captain Scuppers, who says, "Gentlemen, I am sorry I am obliged to interfere with your amusements; but if you have any disputes to settle you must lay forward to the vessel's head." They go forward, accordingly, and return aft with faces not improved in beauty.

On the 4th a shark ten feet long was seen in the wake of the ship. He was attended, as usual, by some pilot-fish. The latter are about the size of a mackerel, and striped like it. A

mysterious connection certainly exists between the shark and these fish, although naturalists dispute the fact. A large hook baited with pork was put over the stern, when a pilot-fish that was stationed close to the dorsal fin of the shark, and moved with him as though they had only one will between them, immediately left its post and swam up to the bait, as if to inspect it, and returned to its former position. The shark then came up to the bait, and bolted it without hesitation; and, after a fierce resistance, was pulled on board and dragged forward amidst the jubilant hoorays of the crew, where he was despatched with thundering blows on the head with the carpenter's hammer. Some steaks were taken from the carcass and cooked for supper; but although well peppered and salted, they were far from being palatable. The liver and stomach were of enormous size. and the heart was no bigger than a walnut; which is exactly what any one acquainted with the disposition of the monster would expect. The pilot-fish seemed restless and distressed at the loss of their big friend, and were to be

seen swimming about under the counter for some hours afterwards.

On the 10th the Porpoise lay becalmed about two miles to the south of St. Paul's Rocks. As that group had very rarely been visited, Frank, Cockerel, and Binks were very curious to land on it, and begged the captain to give them the use of his gig. This favour he at first refused to grant; but at length, as there was no appearance of the weather changing, he gave them the loan of the boat, and ordered two sailors to go with them. The sea seen from the deck of the ship looked perfectly calm, but Frank found when he had got into the boat that the surface heaved and fell with long, glassy undulations. In less than half an hour the gig reached the islets, which were five in number, with peaks rising perhaps to a hundred feet in height, and covered to the top with sea-fowl, chiefly boobies and noddies. There were no human inhabitants on these rocks: but hundreds of thousands of birds were flying about in all directions. Tom Pitch and Bill Swab made fast the boat to a rock, and came on shore with the passengers. These sailors found much amusement in knocking down the birds with stretchers; but getting tired of this sport, they began to gather the eggs, which lay in great numbers on the rocks.

Having seen as much as they wanted of the island, the party got into the boat, and rowed back to the barque, which was slowly forging ahead although her canvas was flapping in the still air.

On the 30th a Cape pigeon flew around the vessel for several hours, and an albatross was also seen. The chain cables were hauled up from the hold, and laid ready for use on deck,—a sign that the vessel was approaching her destination. The sea began to turn from a lovely blue to a dirty green,—another sign that land was near. A barque with the flag of Buenos Ayres at her peak passed the *Porpoise*; and on the 3rd December Cape Santa Maria was seen at sunset from the tops—the first land, excepting Paul's Rocks, that had been distinctly visible since the vessel had been off the coast of Ireland, nearly two months before.

To Frank, who had never been from home before, everything in this region of the globe was novel and interesting. When he came on deck on the morning of the 4th he saw a long, low, desert-looking coast on the starboard side. Myriads of dragon-flies filled the air, and strange and beautiful insects swarmed on the deck, and clung to every rope and sail. Millions of moths were driven before the light breeze like a storm of snow. Birds of beautiful plumage had followed to feed on them, and perched on the deck and on the ratlins. In the evening all hands had capital sport in catching palamitas, a narrow fish with projecting under jaw, abounding at the mouth of the Rio de la Plata. They are caught with a rag, and are of delicate flavour.

The *Porpoise* now seemed to be near the end of her voyage. But there is many a slip between the cup and the lip, at sea. The wind grew light and inconstant, and about noon on the 5th it became dead calm, the atmosphere being sultry and oppressive in an uncommon degree, when suddenly, and without any warning, a tremendous hurricane, or *pampero*, as it

is called, blew from the south-west and took the ship aback. In a moment the foremast went by the board, and dragged down the main-top mast and top-gallant mast. jib-boom was also broken; and the barque, in short, was rendered a helpless wreck. Three of the crew were knocked overboard and perished. Captain Scuppers, although terribly excited by the disaster, kept his presence of mind, and ordered the anchors to be dropped and the wreck to be cut away; but before this could be done the vessel had drifted out to sea. The carpenter, on sounding, reported that she had sprung a leak, and was making water very fast. All hands were ordered to the pumps, the passengers being obliged to take their turn with the crew. Frank toiled with the others until his arms became so exhausted that he could not lift them. Notwithstanding all their efforts, the water kept gaining, and some of the crew turned mutinous, and refused to pump any longer.

The captain then ordered the boats to be lowered, and one was safely launched from the skids, although it was a difficult matter. Six of the crew had knocked in the end of a cask of Prestonpans twelve-guinea ale, and sat drinking in the hatchway to refresh themselves after their labour, and became so unruly that they refused to come on deck or to leave the ship. One declared that he never felt so happy in his life. There being no time to lose, the captain ordered the sober men and passengers into the boat, which was heaving and dashing alongside. Ten souls, all told, got safely on board, and pushed off from the sinking vessel. They were provided with a bag of biscuits and a keg of water, but were unable to save any of their clothes except what they had on. Captain Scuppers had secured the ship's papers and some money; but in the hurry and confusion had left his chronometers and other valuables in the cabin. Poor Frank had forgot all about his money until it was too late to get it out of his trunk, and Binks and Cockerel had been equally improvident.

When the boat had rowed off to a short distance, the crew lay upon their oars, so as to

see the last of the *Porpoise*. The sun by this time was about setting, and threw his crimson beams upon the crests of the rolling billows and on the sinking wreck. The seamen, hardened as they were, shuddered when the sound of drunken revelry was borne to their ears upon the fitful breeze, and when they heard familiar voices singing in such appalling circumstances the following verses to a capstan tune:—

- "The good ship *Porpoise*, we are told,

 Has ten feet water in the hold.

 *Chorus—Hurro! hurro! mirancy!
- "But whilst a plank of her can float,
 We will not leave her in the boat.

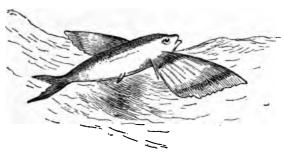
 Hurro! hurro! mirancy!
- "And should she sink, why, let her go,
 We all must die some time, you know.

 Hurro! hurro! mirancy!"

Ah, what a fearful decoy drink is, and how many unhappy souls it has led to perdition! But it is proper to mention, that although the *Porpoise* sailed from Glasgow, only three of these reckless reprobates were Scotchmen, one of the others being an Irishman, one a Dane, and the third Sambo Slush the cook,

who was of negro parentage, although born in Greenock.

The barque swam heavily on the waves, heaving and pitching at the wrong time, until at last she plunged head foremost into the deep, and vanished with all on board. Both vessel and cargo were fully covered by insurance.



THE FLYING-FIRM

CHAPTER III.

THE SURVIVORS OF THE CREW AND PASSENGERS LAND SAFELY IN BUENOS
AYRES, BUT FALL AMONGST THIEVES—THEY RECEIVE A HOSPITABLE WELCOME FROM A SHEPHERD.



FTER the catastrophe described in the previous chapter, the men in the boat bent to their oars and rowed

by turns, and Captain Scuppers steered for the coast of Buenos Ayres, the wind having shifted to the north-west. Darkness came on amain; but the stars served to steer by. At sunrise the land was visible ahead; and although the sea grew calm, it was the afternoon of the 6th before the boat grounded on the shallow shore. All hands breakfasted on biscuits and water, the boat was abandoned about half a mile from dry land, and the crew splashed through the water up to the beach,—Dick Toggles, the apprentice, carrying the biscuit

bag on his back the greater part of the way.

On arriving at the beach they were met by five natives, or Gauchos, on horseback. They were rather good-looking men with dark complexions, and were all gaily dressed in striped ponchos, or cloaks, and chiripas, the latter being a cloth they wore instead of trousers. They lifted their hats with much grace, as the weary castaways toiled up the beach, and one of them addressed the captain, and he spoke thus:—

Gaucho. Buenas dias, Señor—como esta? Celebro mucho ver a Usted.

Skipper. Oh! you need not talk to me in that lingo. I don't understand a word of it.

Gaucho. No entiende, Señor Gringo? Lo siento mucho, amigo mio.

Skipper. It is no use talking that way to me, I tell you. Speak in English if you want me to understand. How can I get to the city?

Gaucho. No entiendo, señor. Adios! Here the whole party of natives wheeled

about as if they had taken their leave; but they had scarcely gone fifty yards when they returned at the gallop, each swinging a coil of leathern rope above his head; and before Captain Scuppers had time to know his danger, he found himself bound in the noose of a lasso, and dashing along the ground in the wake of the Gaucho and his horse. In a short time he became unconscious, when the Gaucho dismounted and gave him a smart rap or two on the head with the metal handle of his rebenque or whip, and then robbed him of all his clothes and money, and left him bleeding and naked and half dead. Poor Frank was treated in much the same way by another Gaucho, excepting that he received no blows. But his body was bruised by the thumps he got on the ground, and his face and hands were scratched by thistles. The mate, as well as Cockerel and Binks, were badly bruised, and stripped to the skin.

The sailors, including the carpenter and two apprentices—who, thanks to their worthless clothes, had escaped the lasso—on recovering

from their surprise at seeing five of their party captured and plundered in such a singular manner, went off hallooing and shouting in the direction they had seen the Gauchos take, and in ten minutes or a quarter of an hour came to where the skipper was lying insensible close to a thicket of enormous withered thistles. Not far from him Bill Smith found the mate covered with blood, but quite conscious. On being lifted to his feet, he was able to walk, although feebly, to where the captain lay. Frank, as well as John Cockerel and Benjamin Binks, guided by the shouts of the sailors, found their way to the same spot. Whilst Jack Belay was binding the head of the captain with a handkerchief to stop the bleeding and keep off the flies, a young man, whom they at first sight took for a Gaucho, rode slowly up and saluted the party with a "Buenos dias, señores; but I think you are Englishmen. Caramba! what is the matter?"

The second mate narrated all that had happened to them, when the young man, who was tall and thin, with fair hair and light blue eyes, although he was dressed in the native style, answered: "When I saw the villains pass my puesta roaring with laughter, I thought they had been up to some mischief. It would be a trate to see them hung, or even shot, but as there will be no way of catching these rascals and getting justice done on them, you must just grin and bear it. You had better all come up to my house, where I will do what I can to make you comfortable. It is not far off. I have been eight years in the camp, and take care of a flock of sheep on shares. My name was Patrick M'Cafferty at home, but people here call me Don Patricia."

Bill Smith and Jack Belay placed the skipper on the saddle of the shepherd's horse, and Pat sat behind and supported him, and riding slowly guided the party to his hut.

Frank had time by the way to take a glance at the country, which at that season had not a very prepossessing appearance. It was as level as a billiard-table, and excepting for patches of gigantic thistles with withered leaves and downy heads, was as destitute of vegetation as

a turnpike road. A large flock of miserable-looking sheep crawled over the plain followed by a cloud of dust. It was then the height of summer, and a seca, or drought, had prevailed for several months. Occasionally he observed the bloated carcass of a sheep or ox, with carrion birds feeding on it. The air felt like the mouth of a furnace, and thistle-seed was drifting along like snow. He repented that he had come to such a dreary desert, and Cockerel vowed he would return home on the first opportunity.

Although the shepherd's hut was close at hand, the mate was much exhausted, and ready to faint before he got there. It was a rancho with mud walls and a thatch of flags. Hard by was a shed open on all sides, in which two horses were tied up. There was not a tree near the house, nor as far as the eye could reach around it. But uninviting as this humble dwelling appeared, all the party were thankful for the shelter it afforded, and no one could have been more polite and hospitable than Don Patricia. He clothed the naked in such gar-

ments as he possessed. To Frank he lent a shirt and a chiripa. The latter is an easy and graceful dress for the saddle, and when the wearer is on foot looks like a cross between knickerbockers and a petticoat. Binks got a piece of sacking with a hole in the middle through which to put his head. The ponchos are made in that way. He was not at all depressed by his misfortune; and when others laughed at him he laughed too. But Cockerel, who was always particular about his dress, looked disgusted when no clothing was offered him but two sheep-skins, which he tied together, and wore like a herald's tabard—one before and one behind. He was such a ludicrous figure that the sailors were obliged to cover their mouths with their horny hands to conceal their smiles.

The hut contained two rooms. The puestero, or shepherd, spread some sheep-skins for a bed on the floor of the inner room, and the captain was laid upon it, and in an hour or two recovered consciousness, although he groaned occasionally and complained of pain all over his body. The mate was advised to

go to bed also, and a saddle was spread out for him alongside the captain. The sick having been attended to, Pat invited his other guests to take an "ivory chair," as he facetiously called an ox skull, which was the only sort of chair on the premises. The house was, however, well furnished with skulls; and squatting on these substitutes for seats, the castaways smoked their pipes, whilst the shepherd kindled a fire and prepared the supper.

In a few minutes a good fire of bosta burned on the earthen floor of the room, and Pat took the carcass of a sheep, and thrusting a spit through it, stuck the point of the latter with a slant into the ground, so that the meat hung over the fire. He then put on a kettle to boil and make mate, or Paraguayan tea, which is a favourite beverage amongst all classes in the river Plate countries. It is made from yerba, the leaf of a kind of holly, and is infused in a small gourd and sucked through a tube of silver, or tin, called a bombilla. The taste is bitter and not very agreeable to a stranger, but he soon begins to like it; and the natives

are passionately fond of it. Don Patricia handed round the matè-cup, and then said "Now, señores, I shall leave you for a little, to look after the asado, until I put my sheep in the corral. Don't spare the coals, for we have an inexhaustible supply in the sheeppen."

Pat was seen to vault upon his horse without using the stirrup, and to gallop off like the wind, and in a short time returned driving a flock of two thousand sheep before him, which he shut up in the large wire-fenced corral at the end of the house. The animals being at that season very lean, or flaco, as he called it, he slaughtered one of them, that there might be abundance of mutton for all. Pipes were smoked and mate drunk until the roast was ready, when he carried it outside the hut and stuck the spit in the ground, and requested the company to bring their chairs outside and help themselves. By way of example, he cut off a piece of the roast with his sheath-knife, and holding it in his left hand (for there was neither table, fork, nor platter in the establishment), he began to eat with a healthy appetite. The hungry castaways, squatting upon oxskulls, ate voraciously.

"I am very sorry I have no bread to offer you," said Pat. "I have not tasted any for months myself."

"But we have some biscuits," said Dick Toggles. "Jack Belay and I brought up the bag from the beach."

The biscuits were produced, and every one made a hearty supper. A biscuit with a lump of meat on it was handed to the skipper and mate; but they ate little or none. Pipes were lighted again, and the shepherd declared he had never spent such a happy evening all his life. "I feel in a musical mood," said he; "and before I call upon others for a song, caramba! I'll give you one myself."

THE SHEPHERD'S SONG.

I am a poor shepherd from Erin's green isle, Although I am dressed in the rale Gaucho style. For years I have dwelt in my rancho alone, With none to care for my laugh or my groan.

If I had a darling, bewitching and sweet, I'd build a mud cottage, commodious and neat,

With a flooring of brick all decent and clane And a roofing of paja to keep off the rain.

On mutton I'd feed her three times in the day, With biscuits galore and a cup of good tay; On a couch of sheep-skins she might slumber at ease, With none to disturb her excepting the fleas.

At the back of the house I'd dig a long ditch, Enclosing a garden extensive and rich, Where the peach and potato and pumpkin I'd rear, To vary the fare of my delicate dear.

I'd buy her a horse, the finest e'er seen,
With elegant horns,—on the saddle I mean,—
And a nice little shoe upon the near side,
That all round the country my charmer might ride.

But a duck of that species, ochon-a-ree! Is a rare sort of bird in this foreign country; And a damsel half savage and tawny of skin My enduring affection never shall win.

Having sung this in capital style, although the last note of the air was rather long drawn out, the shepherd requested Bill Smith to favour the company with a song, which he did in a bass voice that seemed to issue from the bung-hole of a barrel:—

BILL SMITH'S SONG.

Twelve years I've passed
Before the mast,
I am a common sailor;
I've made some trips
In China ships,
And been on board a whaler.

At Calleo,
And Ichaboe,
Amongst the guano sneezing;
In every clime
I've spent my time,
Now broiling and now freezing.

Now at the Horn,
With top-sails torn,
When skies looked black and sooty,
Aloft, below
'Midst hail and snow,
I had to do my duty.

Then on the line,
In fierce sunshine,
When all the sails were shaking,
And not a breeze
Blew o'er the seas,
For weeks I have been baking.

I've learned this rule,
But not at school,
Which comforts me in sorrow,—
I often say,
Enjoy to-day,
And never mind to-morrow.

When Bill had finished his song the shepherd called on Jack Belay, who sung as follows:—

JACK BELAY'S SONG.

The people that are penned in towns, Like sheep penned in a fold, Have little notion what strange sights We mariners behold.

Some years ago I made a trip Across the Northern Sea, On board the *Pretty Peggy* from Archangel to Dundee.

And one delightful summer night,
When standing at the wheel,
I heard a woman's voice that seemed
To sing below the keel.

Sometimes it seemed below the keel, Six fathoms in the tide, And now it sounded on the port, And now the starboard side.

The wind was light, sou'-west by sou',
The sea was calm below,
The northern sky was bright as day
And in a rosy glow.

And clear and sweet the voice did sing, All in the stilly night; Whilst I stood leaning on the wheel, And listening with delight.

With folded hands and upturned eyes, Like some one that adored, When, flop! a mermaid, dripping wet, Leaped from the sea on board!

Her wavy hair, the hue of gold, Half hid her lovely neck, And like a cloak fell down behind Until it swept the deck.

Her cheeks were like the rosy clouds
That decked the northern skies;
And bright as stars, yet soft and blue,
Appeared her lovely eyes.

She stood beside the binnacle
Upon her tail upright;
And there I leaned abaft the wheel
Astonished at the sight.

In accents sweet and musical She thus addressed me:
"Oh, come, thou jolly mariner,
And live below the sea!

- "I'll take thee to a coral cave
 Where thou may'st live at ease,
 And feed thee on the finest fish
 That float about the seas."
- "My pretty maid," I answered,
 "Too happy would I be,
 If I could swim, to go with you
 And live below the sea.
- "Besides, my dear, I must have air,
 And cannot breathe the brine;
 Wherefore, unless you come with me,
 You never can be mine.
- "I'll keep you in a caravan
 And drive the country round,
 And not a soul shall see my pet
 Unless he pays a pound.
- "I'll play the bugle and the gong, The organ and the drum; And all the folks in every town To see my show will come.
- "Of one-pound notes, and sovereigns too, We soon will make enough; And every day we'll eat soft bread, And dine on steaks and duff."

With that I made a run at her, And grasped her suddenly; When up she raised her little fist And hit me in the eye.

A harder blow I never got, It made my senses reel: "Take that!" an angry voice exclaimed,
"For sleeping at the wheel."

And looking up with watery gaze
No mermaid could I see,
But close beside the binnacle
The skipper glared at me!

"A pretty good yarn, Jack," said Bill Smith; "but I think it is about time we were turning in now," and the shepherd set about preparing beds for the party. This was a simple matter, as there were plenty of sheep-skins on the premises. Some of these were spread on the floor of the hut, and some on the ground outside. Frank lay down at first in the house; but he had scarcely done so when he was attacked by a host of fleas of amazing activity and ferocity, and he was glad to take up his sheep-skins and make a bed under the sky. Here he lay for a little, listening to the strange sounds that broke the stillness of the night. Adjacent to the house was a corral in which a number of rams were shut up, and these animals kept up a continual battle with one another. The dull thud which they gave and received on their thick foreheads resounded

Now and again the solemn silence would be broken by the cries of owls and tirateras—the latter a kind of lapwing which keeps late hours, and is always ready to sound an alarm, by day or night. Overhead were the Southern Cross and other unfamiliar constellations, with extensive desert spaces between. But these sights and sounds melted away, and Frank fell into a deep sleep, which lasted until the sun had risen high above the horizon. All the sailors were up and walking fore and aft in front of the house with their hands in their pockets and pipes in their mouths. A fire was again burning on the floor of the rancho, and the puestero could be seen bounding on horseback after his flock and swinging his lasso above his head. A sheep was caught at the first cast, and killed, and the carcass dragged up to the hut by the horse at a canter. In a few minutes the sheep was skinned and the meat roasting over the fire. It must be remembered that people in the camp devour larger quantities of flesh than people do in this country; probably because it is not so nutritious, and because less bread is consumed. Frank must have devoured at least a pound of mutton to breakfast, and Cockerel much more. Pat complimented the latter on his appetite, and compared him to a wolf in sheep's clothing!

The captain and mate, although still very stiff and weak, were able to rise and take some meat and mate. The captain had a bump above his eyebrow about the size and colour of a plover's egg; for which Pat told him he ought to feel thankful, as the blow he had got might have cracked his skull.

When breakfast was over and pipes filled, Bill Smith said, "I think this sort of life would suit me for a spell; and if I could get work I would try it for two or three months."

"Caramba! it will be an aisy matter to get work," said the puestero; "you will get that same at any puesta or estancia you like to call at. My patron, Don Diego Flannagan, wants a peon to dig ditches and put up wire fencing. I can lend you a horse to take you to his

house. You can see it away there to the west like a pimple on the horizon."

But as the other seamen, as well as Cockerel and Binks, wanted also to find employment, it was arranged, as there were not horses for all, that they should walk in the first instance to the house of Don Diego. "He is a kindhearted man when he is sober," said the shepherd, "and so is his wife; and they will be glad to see and assist you. Although he does not know "a bay from a bull's fut," he knows how to make money, and owns ten thousand sheep, besides other quadrupeds, and as much land as an earl or a lord at home. He keeps his carriage and four horses, and drives it himself too!"

Pat took Frank aside and invited him to stop a week or two with him to help him to look after the sheep. "I lead a lone life," he said, "and I shall be glad of your company. When I first came here every day was a twelvementh; but I have got used to it now, although I often feel triste." This invitation Frank gladly accepted; and he shook hands

1

with Cockerel and Binks as well as with the sailors as they left the puesta. Binks, who was dressed in his sackcloth poncho, turned his funny short face over his shoulder and grinned as he walked off; but Cockerel in his sheep-skins and old canvas slippers stalked moodily away, and Frank could not help laughing at his grotesque appearance.

"And now, Frank," said the shepherd, "you and I will go and water the sheep." sort of work is done on horseback in Buenos Ayres, even drawing water. Frank was directed to mount a horse which stood saddled and bridled at the door, and to ride him to the well. To the girth of the horse, which is a strong broad belt of raw hide, a lasso is fastened by a big leathern button. The lasso is then passed through a pulley attached to a cross-beam over the well, and the other end is tied to a huge bucket. When the bucket is at the bottom of the well, the horse is ridden forward, and so draws the bucket to the top, where Don Patricia stands ready to receive it, and to empty the water into a box alongside,

from whence it pours into a line of sheep-troughs.

The flock which is feeding, it may be at a distance, no sooner hears the sound of the water than it rushes madly to the well, leaving a cloud of dust behind. The sun glares in a cloudless sky, and the light breeze creeps across the desolate plain like the air near an oven, and the poor animals, which have had nothing to eat for months before but the seeds and withered leaves of thistles, drink deeply of the water, and are reluctant to leave the troughs even after they are able to drink no more. Frank rode backwards and forwards thus drawing water until the flock had quenched its thirst: and as it numbered about two thousand head, the operation took some time. times the water is drawn by a bucket made of the skin of a cow, which, by an ingenious arrangement of the hoisting tackle, empties itself when it reaches the top of the well, the water pouring out of what was the cow's This is called the valde sin fonda, or bottomless bucket



DRAWING WATER.

Page 60.

Shortly after the sheep had been watered Frank observed them gather together like soldiers, and form themselves into squares, where they stood motionless with drooping heads. He called Pat's attention to this singular arrangement, when he answered, "Every living soul in this country, both man and baste, takes a rest for two or three hours at mid-day; the sheep are now taking their siesta, and I think I'll go and take mine. You had better take a nap too." But Frank, although the heat was oppressive, did not feel sleepy, so he rambled around the puesta. The sky was a deep blue, and the sun blazed furiously. The perfect stillness and sense of loneliness made a solemn impression on the mind, deeper than what is felt at the dead of night.

At the corner of the corral, where the earth had been thrown out of a ditch, a number of delicate sheep had collected, as the only spot where they could find a little shelter in which to die. Frank stood and gazed at these miserable creatures with the deepest pity and horror.

He mentioned the horrible spectacle to Pat,

who answered quite lightly; for people in the camp become utterly callous to the sufferings of the lower creatures.

When the sheep awakened from their siesta, and began to wander again in search of food, Don Patricia required occasionally to mount a ladder which stood against the chimney, and from that eminence watch their movements, lest they might stroll away from their querencia, or proper pasture, and mix with some other flock,—an occurrence that sometimes happens and occasions much trouble to the shepherds, who are obliged to pen up the mingled flocks and separate them one by one. Each flock has a distinguishing mark, such as a cut or two in the ear; and when the flock seemed inclined to stray, then it was necessary to gallop to it and drive it back. This duty was often assigned to Frank, who, although an awkward rider at first, soon learned to vault upon the saddle and to sit with ease. A horse always stood ready for this work. About sunset he also went and drove the sheep to the corral.

Next morning (8th December) Don Diego

Flannagan rode over to the puesta in his shirt sleeves, and brought some clothes with him for the captain and mate, whom he invited in the most hearty manner to come to his house and make it their home. He expressed much sympathy with the unfortunate men. The captain thanked him and said he would be happy to partake of his hospitality for a few days, until he was sufficiently recovered to go to the city, where he meant to lay his case before the British Consul, and to request him to get the Gauchos brought to justice. Don Diego applauded his resolution, but expressed his opinion that the robbers would never be found, nor be punished if they were.

Don Diego was a strongly built man of about fifty, who spoke English with a rich brogue and with a large admixture of Spanish words and phrases. Captain Scuppers and the mate got horses from the shepherd, and left the puesta along with the patron (as the farmer or master is called), the captain not forgetting to thank the hospitable shepherd for the kindness that had been shown to him and

to his men. He said that he would remember his conduct when he got to the city and had the power of manifesting his gratitude.

When Frank had spent a month at this puesta, he wrote a letter to his mother, which Don Diego, who was going to the city on business, promised to post for him. It was as follows:—

"6th January.

"My Dear Mother,—Although it is only three months since I left home it seems three years, and I would willingly walk twenty miles with pease in my shoes to get a letter from yourself or my father. The good barque *Porpoise* made a fair passage to the river Plate, but was blown out again in a gale, and sank with six men on board. Ten of us, however, reached the land in a boat; but we were no sooner on shore than five of us were lassoed and robbed of our clothes by the natives. But a gentleman named M'Cafferty took us all to his *rancho* and treated us very kindly. I am living with him just now, and help him to herd his sheep. This is a splendid country, and I never felt so

happy in my life. I have got the use of a horse, and he has given me a shirt and chiripa, and a cuchillo with a German-silver hilt to wear in my tirador. He teaches me Spanish, and I am beginning to understand it pretty well. I have learned to bridle and saddle a horse, and to ride him at the full gallop. Mutton is plentiful here, and we have a matè three times a day. We play draughts at night. I made a board of a piece of hide, and men of leather, one half with the hair on. We put the board upon a bucket; and a broken bottle filled with tallow, with a rag for a wick, does for a lamp. We sit upon ox-skulls, which make good seats when you are used to them. I sleep in the open air on a sheep-skin; and we take a siesta in the rancho for two hours at noon. We close the door, so that the flies, which are a great pest, may fancy it is night. By this dodge we can get peace, except for the fleas, which dance about in thousands. However, I do not care so much for them as for the binchucas, which are a sort of beetles, with long noses, that come

out of the cracks in the wall and bite you when you are asleep. There is another insect called a bichi colorado, which is so small that you cannot see it unless when crowds of them are together. I see them like a ring of red paint around the eyes of dogs and horses; and they bite human beings as well. The camp just now is all alive with a gray beetle called a bichi mora: it does not bite, and is harmless unless you happen to kill it upon your skin, when it raises a large blister. have seen very few scorpions in the house, but swarms amongst the bosta, or coals; and also spiders as big as walnuts. They are very plucky, and run at you if you threaten them; and their bite is said to be very like that of a snake. Sometimes the camp is covered with bugs about the size of a sixpence; but I think they are vegetarians, although they have an awful smell when trampled on.

"This place is not so lonely as you would imagine, and somebody calls in almost every week. Three Gauchos called last week, and Don Patricia invited them to supper, when they devoured a whole sheep. Then he made them sleep outside, and kept me in and locked the door, as he says they are very polite, but not to be trusted. But he has a good revolver and a single-barrelled gun, so that we were quite safe.—With love to my dear old daddy, I am your affectionate son,

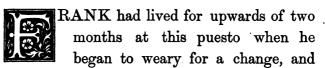
"Frank Powderhorn."



SHEATH-KNIFE.

CHAPTER IV.

MIRAGE-A SCOTCH ESTANCIERO AND PUESTERO.



Don Patricia advised him to go to the estancia (or farm-house) of Como-se-llama, which belonged to a Scotchman named Don Alejandro Fulano; but added that he would be delighted to see him again if he ever felt inclined to pay him a visit. He offered him the loan of a horse, if he would promise to send it back; but, as the distance was only six leagues, Frank thought it would save trouble were he to walk there. "Que hombre!" said Pat; "people would think you mad if you were to try such a thing. Nobody walks in this country. The very cattle fly at a man when they see him

on foot. I believe they think a man and a horse are one person; and that a man, when out of the saddle, is a monster." Frank, however, resolved he would try; and on the morning of the 16th of February he thanked his hospitable friend for all his kindness and started on foot for Como-se-llama.

He was obliged to steer by the sun, and even had he been acquainted with the landmarks which enable the experienced traveller to find his way across the monotonous plains, the knowledge would have availed him little on that morning, as the whole horizon was disturbed by mirage. The camp, like some poor and ugly damsel, in the vain hope of appearing attractive, had decked herself with counterfeit jewels. The desolate landscape was adorned all around with rivers, lakes, and glimpses of the sea—beautiful but spurious. Here majestic rivers flowed not a mile distant, their ample bosoms gemmed with woody islets, whose shadows trembled in the rapid current. ' There was a sand-girt bay with ships and boats at anchor, the long, low promontories

crowned by fortress and beacon, and beyond a view of the far-stretching ocean—all distinct and vivid as reality. This wonderful phantasmagoria was composed of the most commonplace materials. The embattled castle changed, on a nearer approach, into a wretched rancho; and the fleet of war-ships into a menada of mares and foals. There was not a drop of real water on the surface all the way.

He passed dry-shod across the bed of what had been a broad stream, where skeletons of sheep and cattle lay bleaching in the sun. The remains of horses that had come to drink, and had stuck in the mud and perished, still stood in the same position as they were in when alive. A number of little birds, oppressed by the heat, crept for shade into hoofpits. A few forests of thistles still remained to keep the animals from utterly starving; but in general the ground was herbless and bare. It was the end of summer, but the country had none of the charms we associate with that season. The sun was broiling hot. There were no trees to refresh the eye, no

singing birds to delight the ear; but little owls flew out of their burrows, and becked and bowed and shrieked as he passed; and annoying tira-teras wheeled screaming around his head. Sometimes the carcass of a horse or bullock, with chimangos and caranchos feeding on it, tainted the sultry air. Frank's mother seen him walking across that desert, she would not have known him. He wore an old straw hat on his head, and an old striped shirt on his body, with a striped chiripa instead of trousers. His feet were covered with canvas slippers with hemp soles, and he had a broad belt of leather around his waist. He had neither coat nor vest. A sheath-knife was stuck into his belt behind, in the Gaucho style. His face was scorched to a dark brown, which made his blue eyes look very light, and his golden curls look very fair. A bag made of sheep-skin, and containing some roasted mutton, was slung at his back. Although attired in this strange costume, he looked a handsome fellow-so broad in the shoulders and so narrow below the waist, and with such

a firm and elastic step. Neither father nor mother, had they seen him and known him, would have felt ashamed of their boy, although they would have ordered the tailor to come immediately and measure him for a suit of clothes.

He met no human beings by the way, but passed through a menada of mares and their foals. Mares are never worked in Buenos Ayres, but are allowed to wander at liberty all the year round, excepting for one day, when they are caught by the lasso and have their manes and the hair of their tails cropped. The hair is exported. Frank saw about five hundred in one troop, many of them graceful creatures, and a large proportion piebald. When these animals grow too numerous, the excess is driven to Buenos Ayres, where they are slaughtered for the skins and grease.

After walking for five or six hours Frank saw the estancia house of Como-se-llama. It was of one story, and terrace-roofed; but from the atmospheric refraction did not appear to be a house at all, but a ship of the line,

with all her canvas spread; and not till he had walked to within a mile of it did it assume its proper character. Contrasted with the desert spot he had been living in, it seemed a paradise. At the back was a large plantation of peach-trees, the green foliage of which was grateful to the eye that had so long looked on a burnt-up wilderness.

Señor Alejandro Fulano was a man of middle age, who had been a ploughman at home, but who, after twenty years of persevering effort, favoured by fortune, had acquired about twenty square miles of land, and some twenty thousand sheep, and it may be one hundred horses. He was upright in his dealings, and had great capacity for business. He was a man worthy of respect, and was respected. The natives stood with their hats off when they spoke to him. He was fond of books, and had made up by reading for the want of early education. He was quiet and tacitum in manner; but apt, on provocation, to break into uncontrollable rage, which made others beware.

This gentleman received Frank very kindly, invited him into the sala, or hall, of his house, and engaged him to look after a flock of sheep, Crook, the shepherd, being then confined to bed with a broken leg, caused by his horse having fallen on it. Señor Alejandro agreed to pay Frank 250 dollars, or about £2, a month of wages, together with board and lodging. "You must be tired after your long walk in the sun," said Señor Alejandro. "Come and have tea, and some carne to it, and then take a stroll in the montè, and eat as many peaches as you like."

After tea Frank went to the orchard, and felt exhilarated by the beauty of the trees, to the sight of which he had been so long unaccustomed. The montè was about fifty acres in extent; and the trees, although only three years old, were heavily laden with the most delicious and wholesome fruit. Cartloads of the finest peaches littered the ground. As he sauntered through the wood, munching the fruit, Frank paused occasionally to look at the rude nests of the turtle-doves, which were on a level

with his face. The birds, when he approached too near, would fly off, and leave their two little eggs lying on a nest so flat that the slightest motion of the branch would have rolled them Strange birds and strange nests he also saw and examined with great interest, although he did not know their names. Some of the plants, too, caught his attention. At the edge of the wood was a row of gigantic aloes, with thick leaves eight or ten feet long, and with flowering stems twenty-five feet in height, which had shot up in a single season. On the candelabra-looking stalk he observed a nest or two, about the size of a man's head, built of mud like a swallow's, but globular, and with a door in the front like the nostril of a horse. This was the nest of the hornera, or oven-bird, which he soon discovered was very common. He afterwards saw these nests on the top of every post that had a forked top. He also observed a pair of foxes run from under the prickly leaves of the aloe, and turn round and stare at him in the most impudent manner.

At the back of the estancia house was a row

of rancho huts, in one of which he was quartered. The room was clean and comfortable, with a brick floor, and furnished with a bed called a catrè. The latter is like a long campstool, with a bullock's hide nailed on the top. He was quite pleased with his apartment, although he regarded the rats, which came through holes in the mud walls, as a great nuisance, and resolved to exterminate them. These pests would enter whenever the light was put out, and eat the candle, and jump on his bed, and keep him from sleeping. when his sheep were taking their siesta, he spent the time in making rat-traps; at first according to the common box pattern, by means of which he destroyed a number of the vermin. But he improved on his first attempts, and invented a trap (unlimited) which was designed, after catching one rat, to set itself and be ready for another. The idea was ingenious; but, unfortunately, the rats grew wary and suspicious, and would not go into it, and although abundant outside, never entered the room.

His first duty in the morning was to drive a

troop of horses from the pasture to the corral, where they were shut up for the day without food or water. There they were ready for any one wanting a horse. Then he went to breakfast, which he took with the patron and family. Like the other meals, it consisted of roastmutton, biscuits and tea, or mate. Then mounting his horse, he drove the sheep to the pasture. In the forenoon he drew water for them by the manga, which is a long canvas bag, without a bottom, like a wind-sail, one end being kept open by an iron hoop. That end is tied to a lasso, which passes through a pulley fixed at the top of three long poles. The other end of the lasso is fastened to a horse. When the horse is walked up to the pit or well, the manga drops into the water and becomes filled. When the horse turns and canters off, one end of the manga is raised to the pulley, and the water pours through a pipe at the other end, and falls into a cistern, and thence into the troughs. large quantity of water can be raised by this ingenious machine by one man and horse in a short time.

6

At the sound of the water the sheep rush to the well and drink greedily; and horses and cattle that may be far off follow at the gallop, and crowd round the troughs, kicking and biting and butting each other in the struggle to reach the precious fluid. Frank, as he cantered backwards and forwards, observed with much interest the immense numbers of beautiful little birds, many of them with orange and black plumage, which had flocked from the montè to the well to quench their thirst. Some of them fluttered across the troughs, and snatched a drop as they passed; and others with outstretched heads perched upon the backs of the sheep, and waited patiently until the quadrupeds had drunk and gone away, when hundreds would alight on the edge of the troughs, and drink and rest, and drink and drink again. Frank always took care to draw an additional supply for these pretty little creatures.

Sometimes, whilst the sheep were taking their siesta, he would ride to the estancia and assist the patron to destroy the black ants, which are very destructive to young trees; and, in consequence, an incessant warfare is waged against them. These curious creatures have large underground cities, as populous as London, with houses and warehouses, in which they live and store their provender. Columns of them hundreds of yards in length, each individual carrying the leaf of a tree upright on his back, like the sail of a yacht, are to be seen marching from the monte, whilst other columns are going empty to it in search of plunder. checked, they soon strip a young plantation of all its foliage, and kill the trees. A machine is used to blow the fumes of sulphur into their subterranean retreats, and so suffocate the inhabitants. They are then dug up by the cartload, and to make sure of their destruction, are sometimes beaten into a paste with a spade.

After dinner, which was at noon, a siesta of two hours was allowed to all hands, and perfect silence reigned over the place. Then Frank mounted his horse again, and rode about watching his flock until near sunset, when he drove

Often about this hour he could them home. not help observing, for they were very numerous everywhere, strange animals like monstrous rabbits, but with rough bristly muzzles, and with bodies as big as four rabbits rolled into These were biscachas. They make irregular, wide, pits in the ground, and on the banks of the pits they dig tunnels, into which a boy might crawl. These passages are crooked, and conduct to spacious chambers underground. When the sulphur-smoke is blown into one hole, it may be seen issuing from holes hundreds of yards distant. As the biscachas destroy the pasture by their excavations, they are slaughtered without mercy. When one family or colony is smoked to death, the biscachas outside, it is said, open the premises next day, and bring the bodies of their friends and neighbours to the surface, and put the house again in order. In winter, when the whole country is like a swamp, drains are made to conduct the water into the biscacha burrows, and the quantity required to fill them is amazing. When the animals are forced to come out, they are attacked

by men and dogs. Although retiring in their habits, they become ferocious when brought to bay, and fly at either man or beast, and give a serious bite, if they have a chance. They are furnished with two long incisor teeth in the upper jaw, which have been known to snap off the nose of a dog and to go through a boot. They stay at home during the day, and come out to feed and take the air in the evening, when they may be seen sitting at the mouths of their burrows. At this time they will allow one to approach quite close to them, and all the more readily if one is on horseback, and will sit perfectly still for a few minutes, when suddenly, as though impelled by some horrid suspicion, they dart into their holes with a strange cry, between a grunt and a groan. They have a habit of gathering all sorts of rubbish around their burrows, such as thistle stems, bones and horns, old shoes, and any other hard articles they can find; probably with the intention of solidifying the low embankments formed by the soil that has been thrown up in burrowing, and which, from the entire absence of stones in the ground, would be apt to grow soft, and be washed away in rainy seasons. Sheath-knives are often found in biscacheras. As every one carries a knife, and as they are liable, from the jolting of the horse, to come out of the belt and drop upon the ground, the presence of such articles in such places is not so wonderful as those unacquainted with the customs of the country might imagine. Stones are so rare, that boys who happen to see one will get off their horses to pick it up as a curiosity; and in such a case the specimen is sure to be a flint arrow-head that had belonged to an Indian.

The biscacha burrows are almost always inhabited by a pair of little owls. These are to be seen sitting at the entrance during the day, and they stare, and bow, and scream, in a very comical way, when any one goes near them. They do not associate with the biscachas, but make a small room for themselves just within the entrance to the common burrow, where the female lays two round white eggs. Martins also take advantage of the biscachas'

labours, and live in the burrows. Boys often catch these little owls with the bolas, a weapon which (as made by boys) consists of a thong of raw hide, about five feet in length, with a lead ball at each end. The egg-shell of a lapwing is used as a mould in which to cast the lead balls. This instrument the boys swing around their heads, and fling at any animal they want to catch. When an owl, for instance, is struck by the thong, the balls spin around him, and the thong confines his wings. The bolas can be thrown to a great distance and with much precision. Boys also catch partridges in a curious way-namely, by galloping round them in lessening circles, until the birds become so confused that they allow a noose on the end of a long cane to be put over their heads.

Frank found some diversion in watching the armadillos in the moonlight. It was the species called *peludo*, which was very common in that part of the country. He would stand upon the bar of a gate and see these curious creatures chasing each other, like dogs in sport, under his feet. As their foreheads are covered by a

horny plate, they resemble men in not being able to see above their heads, and they have no suspicion that any one is above them. The peludo is caught for food, in a barrel sunk into the ground and baited with tallow. barrel is like a law-suit, easier to fall into than to get out of. The beast, when caught, is split up the middle and roasted in the shell. The fat on the back is much esteemed by epicures. The peludo himself is not fastidious in his taste, and can dine, when nothing better is to be had, on a sheep-skin, wool and all. The Gauchos (or half-black natives) make guitars of the shell, and tinder-boxes of the conical horny Tidy housewives are frequently much provoked at the peludo, who is not at all ceremonious, and when he pays them a visit, comes up through the earthen floor of the kitchen, or store-room, and leaves it in terrible disorder.

He often noticed, and examined with curiosity, a strange seed of a plant, which looks exactly like a dried mouse with two tails. They are to be seen lying about the camp, and the tails, which are curved, and as hard and sharp as

cobblers' awls, are apt to run into the feet of horses and other animals; which is probably what they are designed for, so that the seed may be carried to a distance. Some naturalists think that they are meant to catch the tails of quadrupeds, and to be so distributed; but the spurs are better adapted for piercing horn or flesh than for clinging to hair. It is, moreover, well known that they run into horses' hoofs. Strange and numerous are the ways which Providence has adopted to distribute plants over the earth!



THE OWL THAT LIVES IN THE BISCACHA BURROWS.

CHAPTER V.

SCOTCHMEN IN BUENOS AYRES—TO BEGUILE THE WEARY HOURS, FRANK WRITES

VERSES—A SAMPLE.

IRDS of a feather flock together, and most of the visitors to Como-sellama were Scotchmen. As many

of them had been long settled in the country, and had been under the necessity of speaking Spanish daily to their foreign puesteros and peones, as well as to the natives, that language had become so familiar, that they were in the habit of borrowing largely from it, even when they conversed in their mother tongue. For a time Frank found some difficulty in understanding what was said when two or three of them happened to be talking together. A small specimen of their style will suffice:—

Don Alejandro. Quire Usted carne, Tam?

Tam. Tomare con preferencia la cabeza—just leave in the sesos—I never weary o' a sheep's head; but I see the tostado has broken his cabresta, and is rowin' in the dust with the recado on his back—dispense Usted, señor—I'll be back in a minute.

The sons of these old settlers, although Scotch by blood, were natives—"children of the country"—in their habits and sympathies, and placed no value on their descent, except that it saved them from the conscription. They wore ponchos and chiripas, and drank mate and smoked cigarillas. To be able to ride any sort of a horse, and to use the lasso and bolas were, in their eyes, the highest accomplishments any man could possess. They could speak English, but with a Spanish lisp; and when they commenced a conversation in English they usually launched into Spanish after a few sentences. These men, it must be noted, although they have adopted the manners and customs of the natives, are the masters of the natives—thanks to the British brains which they have inherited.

"In the day of prosperity be joyful," is a law which God has written on the heart of man, and, indeed, on the hearts of every living creature. To the young this divine command is more imperative than to the old, whose chief enjoyment is in witnessing the happiness of the young. See how this law is obeyed by the lower animals. Look how the young lambs frisk together about the field, or leap and dance upon the broad back of some old recumbent sheep, who turns her head patiently around as she chews the cud. and seems to say, "Well, well, you cannot put an old head upon young shoulders;" or look at the dogs, who hunt each other in fun, and "worry ither in diversion." The writer of this book has often stood, holding both his sides, for half-anhour at a time, as he witnessed the skylarking of, it may be, a hundred horses of all ages in a field. Now they would trot in a body along this side of the enclosure, and then the leaders would suddenly turn, and the rest would follow suit, and the van would become the rear. How they would ha! ha! at this

game, and say, as clearly as words could express it, "What jolly fun! what a time we are having of it!" There can be no doubt that he who would suppress all innocent mirth is not seeking to fulfil the law of God, but is trying to break it.

Come-se-llama was a dull place for a youth, and Frank, in the evenings, felt an intolerable craving for recreation. He spent an hour or two in practising Spanish, by talking with two Basques who worked on the estancia; and to beguile the time, when he was alone, he tried to make a flute out of a bit of cane, which grew abundantly and to a great height at the side of the fences. He bored the requisite number of holes with a hot wire, and succeeded in making an instrument that would sound, although it would not produce the proper notes. He knew nothing of scales or musical intervals, and, consequently, although he felt that something was wrong, he had no idea how to put it right. Music is a great solace in solitude, and every boy with an ear should be taught, or should teach himself, to perform

on some instrument, that he may have a recreation at command when none other is to be had. Baffled in his pursuit of music, Frank took to writing verse, which Benjamin Franklin says is a very good way of learning to write prose. In this exercise he found great pleasure. Amongst other attempts he wrote a description of Buenos Ayres, which a gentleman happening to see, sent it to the English newspaper there, in which it appeared with this note:—

"As a general rule we have no space for poetical effusions; but the following verses seem to us so much above the average in merit, that we are induced to make them an exception. They are, we believe, the production of a Scotch lad, who is at present a shepherd. We shall be happy to hear from that bard again, more especially if he will write in prose, and tell us how sheep are looking in his partido, and if sarne is prevalent in the flocks.—Ed." This notice, Frank blushed to find, was fame. The verses were as follows:—

To folks at home who wish to roam In search of occupation, (A restless tribe), I'll now describe This field for emigration.

The country here, both far and near,
Is level as a table;
And little grain grows on the plain
For bakehouse or for stable.

No groves are seen, nor forests green To break the flat horizon; No rippling rills, nor verdant hills, To rest the weary eyes on.

But tracts immense of thistles dense Appear in rank profusion, And stop the course of man and horse, And cause them much confusion.

The farmers keep great flocks of sheep,
For wool they raise them chiefly;
Vast herds you view of oxen too,
Though this I'll mention briefly.

Though somewhat rough, the nags are tough, And fit for great exertion; No beans nor oats go down their throats And maize is their aversion.

As stones and sticks, as well as bricks, Are scarce and very costly, The houses all, both large and small, With mud are plastered mostly.

In not a few, (I tell you true,)
Ox-skulls are used to squat on;
For stools and chairs no Gaucho cares,
And you can keep your hat on.

I think you'll find the natives kind, Polite, and sometimes chatty; And when within, through tubes of tin They suck their scalding mate. On horses' backs, those awful racks, All day they sit astraddle; And on the floor, when day is o'er, They sleep upon the saddle.

To see them throw the long lasso
Would make you gape with wonder,
Whilst man and horse, with furious force
Rush rattling past like thunder.

With gaudy taste, around the waist They wear broad belts of leather; Six coins or more of silver ore Clasp both the ends together.

Here I may state, though rather late, And it may seem digressive, That through the day the solar ray Is often most oppressive.

In insect life this land is rife,
With bugs the fields are swarming;
Big spiders run beneath the sun,
Whose bite is most alarming.

We've large supplies of blist'ring flies In this delightful region; Locusts and ants devour our plants, For here their name is legion.

Of scorpions, too, we have a few,
Black, venomous, and glist'ning;
I might say more upon this score
If you had time for listening.

In spite of cats, we've lots of rats;
And when in bed and snoring
They leave their holes, in squeaking shoals,
Our rancho huts exploring.

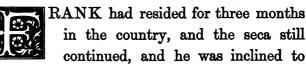
Here geese abound, and swans are found, And ducks beyond computing; This is the land to try your hand If you are fond of shooting. But it is time to close my rhyme About this place productive, For I'm afraid that I have made The picture too seductive.



AN OLD GAUCHO,

CHAPTER VI.

THE END OF THE SECA—THE CAMP IN A FLOOD—BULLOCK CARTS—FRANK
LEAVES THE ESTANCIA.



think that a drought was the normal condition, and that the camp was always as he saw it, when at last signs of an approaching change appeared. The atmosphere became still and extremely warm and stifling, whilst lurid and copper-coloured clouds gathered in the southwest—the sure precursors of a pampero. Rapidly the darkness swept like a wave across the desert plain. Shortly it reached him, and he was in the midst of a hurricane and at his wits' end; for his flock ran before the wind, and he had to canter to the right and the left to try to keep it from being swept away



IN THE MIDST OF A HURRICANE.

Page 94.

			•
	•		
		•	

and lost, as not seldom happens. The gale, densely charged with dust and the dead stems of thistles as thick as walking-sticks, blew with indescribable fury. Noonday was as dark as night. Frank had never imagined a scene so appalling; and he felt as though the world was coming to an end, and the day of judgment was at hand. He lost all idea of the points of the compass; and people with infinitely greater experience made the most preposterous mistakes, and rode off in circles, or in directions the opposite of those they intended. After raging for some hours, the gale as quickly abated as it had arisen, and a torrent of rain fell upon the baked and smoking ground, accompanied by terrific peals of thunder, so loud that it seemed as though enormous bombs and colossal cannon were exploding a few yards up in the air.

The rain continued to fall heavily and without intermission for several days, and the whole plain, to the horizon on all sides, was like one great lake or sea. Immense flocks of geese and ducks and other aquatic fowl, that seemed to have dropped like the rain from the clouds, as they had appeared so quickly, were to be seen fluttering on the surface in all quarters, cackling and quacking in exuberant spirits. Groups of biscachas, whose habitations had been flooded, sat disconsolately on elevations that just peered above the water, a prey to ruthless men and dogs. Horsemen arrayed in ponchos could be observed cantering across the deluged plain enveloped in a veil of spray.

Gradually the flood evaporated, but left streams and lagunas which, for the rest of the year, rendered the drawing of water for the flocks unnecessary. The earth rose naked out of the bath, but in a few days was clothed in a garment of the richest green. Horses, sheep, and cattle, that had been keeping Lent for several months, were now revelling in superabundance, and could be seen sauntering in a luxuriant crop of clover and thistle leaves. But exposure to the storm had killed a hundred of the sheep that were under Frank's care, and the shepherds who were stationed at puestos on the outskirts of the farm had on

an average lost an equal number. The survivors, however, were soon in good condition, and the mutton became fat and delicate. Frank was astonished at his own appetite, and noticed that other Europeans consumed three times as much meat as they could do at home, and that one native devoured more at a meal than would have sufficed for a large family in Britain.

Shortly after the rain, a train of bullock carts, six in number, called at the estancia with boxes of yerba and other provisions, and remained for some days. Until lately, almost all the traffic in the Argentine provinces (of which Buenos Ayres is the chief) was carried on by bullock carts, which make their long voyages in fleets. They often perform great journeys, though at a slow rate, halting occasionally to refresh their teams on any man's ground that suits their convenience, as permitted by law.

The bullock cart is a most extraordinary object, and excites the attention of the stranger in Buenos Ayres. It is very lofty, and the

sides are lathed with rushes or canes, and the roof is covered by hides with the hair outside. This primitive machine is mounted on huge unshod wheels, about eight feet in diameter. The cart is drawn by six bullocks, the yokes being lashed with ropes of raw skin to the horns. The savage-looking driver sits, armed with a long cane having a sharp spike on the end, on the yoke between the heads of the shaft oxen. The four leaders, yoked in pairs, are attached to the cart by hide ropes. axle is never greased, and being made of wood, produces when the vehicle is in motion a creaking and groaning which can be heard a mile off. This noise, so horrible to a human ear, is believed to encourage the oxen; and the driver, at any difficult part of the way, such as a stream, adds to the stimulus by uttering the most diabolical shrieks and shouts of mock laughter, using his goad, to increase the persuasion, with frantic energy. he wants to halt, he strikes the poor animals on the horns with a piece of hard wood like the weight of an eight-day clock.

The bullock cart, though rude in appearance, is well adapted for the work it has to perform. It carries a cargo of three tons; and goods, from the great height of the wheels, are saved from damage by water. The drivers are mostly natives, who have no homes but their carts. They sleep on the ground with a bullock's hide for a bed, in any kind of weather; and have learned by long practice to kindle a fire, to roast meat, and infuse mate out of any sort of materials and in the most unfavourable spots. They cannot read, and the packages they carry generally bear the "mark" (such as is branded on horses and cattle) of the person to whom they are sent, instead of an address. These drivers know the mark of every one in their circuit.

About the middle of April, Crook, the shepherd (who had been off work with a broken leg), had so far recovered that he was able to mount his horse and to take care of his flock himself; so that Frank was under the necessity of looking for employment elsewhere. He received his wages, amounting to 400

dollars, or £3, 5s. 6d., and was puzzled what to do with the money, whether to buy a jacket or a gun; but eventually he decided that it would be most prudent to buy a jacket, and to work for a gun and trousers. Up to this date he had worn an old poncho in bad weather instead of a coat.



THE ALOE.

CHAPTER VII.

LIFE AT A PUESTO-RUNAWAY SAILORS-LETTER FROM HOME.

IDDING adieu to the patron and patrona, Frank rode off from the estancia upon an old horse he had got in a present, with a sheep skin for a saddle, to the puesto of a Scotch shepherd, situated about two leagues off. His name was Andres or Andrew. He was a tall lean man, about thirty years of age, with a thin Roman nose and a projecting under lip. He had lived in his hermitage for six years. It was a neatlooking cottage, with thatched roof and mud walls. The eave in front was prolonged into a veranda, under which the passing traveller was welcome to take a siesta during the midday heat. At the side of the house was a large wire-fenced corral for sheep; and there was a large garden, or quinta, at the back, in which there were a few peach-trees. The cottage had two windows. A rough ladder, with barrel staves for rounds, stood against the chimney, as usual. Paradise-trees grew all around the house, and afforded an agreeable shade. Everything about the place was in good order. A horse, with a native saddle on his back, stood haltered near the door. Three or four large ferocious dogs rushed out, barking furiously at Frank as he rode towards the puesto; but Don Andres immediately appeared at the door and ordered them back.

"Abaja si gusta" (Dismount, if you please), he said. "I am glad to see you. Come in."

The cottage contained three rooms, and was floored with brick, and furnished with a table and chairs. The dinner, consisting of stewed mutton, biscuits, and matè, was ready, and Frank was invited to partake. Andrew explained that he was busy digging ditches, and putting up wire fences, and would be glad if Frank would stay for a few weeks and help

him by looking after the sheep; which he was too happy to do.

He found life more agreeable at the puesto than at the estancia, as there was greater freedom. When the sheep were shut up for the night, he and Andrew passed the time pleasantly over the draught-board until it was time to go to bed. They had no want of society, for a neighbouring shepherd would ride over and spend an hour or two almost every day; and Frank often visited their puestos. And sometimes an old sailor would call and remain for a week.

There are a great many sailors in the camp; men who have run away from their ships with the intention of returning to port whenever they can do so with safety, but who, finding the life congenial, although they will never acknowledge it, stay for years, or for the rest of their days. Jack in course of time gets a horse and a saddle, and cruises about from one place to another, working until he has earned a few dollars, and then squandering it for drink at the pulperia, or grog-shop. Although

an awkward rider at first, he soon becomes an excellent one. Being a handy fellow, who can cook, sew a manga, dig a well, or do any sort of work, he in general receives a hearty welcome at a puesto. In rainy weather he is a great acquisition, as he is always ready to spar with the shepherd; and an hour or two can be spent very pleasantly in trying to knock each other's hats off.

Occasionally, but not often, Don Andres would give a party to his fellow-shepherds, who, after their sheep were put into the corral for the night, would ride for several leagues to attend. A sumptuous supper, of stewed mutton and fowls, of biscuits, and eggs, and tea, and other refreshments, was provided for the body. The spirits, long unnaturally depressed, would rise in an inverse proportion; songs were sung, jests cracked, and in due time the mirth and fun grew "fast and furious." The party dispersed at daylight, each trusting to the sagacity of his horse to find the way home. Sometimes horses would get there with their saddles upside down, and without their riders.

One day a neighbour who had been in the city halted at the puesto and gave Frank a letter, which had been waiting for him at a grocery store. Frank's heart throbbed with joy when he saw his mother's handwriting on the back, and he retired to the quinta that he might read the precious epistle without being observed. The contents were:—

"Whalejaw Cottage, by Sandyport, 16th January.

"My DEAREST FRANK,—I am dreadfully anxious to hear from you, and so is your father, as it seems such a very long time since you left home. I ardently trust you have arrived safely at Buenos Ayres, and have by this time obtained a good appointment, with a liberal salary, for the £20 your poor father gave you will not support you for ever. But my mind is comparatively easy in regard to your pecuniary circumstances, as your grandfather assures me that you cannot want for employment, and will receive handsome pay. He says that even common shepherds and labourers receive 300 dollars per month, with

board and lodging. My dear boy, do not send any of your earnings home, as, although a little cash might add much to our comfort, we will, with God's help, manage to live respectably on what we possess until you are in an affluent position, and able to assist us without detriment to your own prospects. After providing decent clothes for yourselfand, I trust, you will never forget that you are a gentleman, and that the majority of people judge of you by your appearance put the money you earn in the bank, so that you may be able to purchase an estate in a year or two, and to stock it with sheep and cattle, as well as to build a commodious house on it. I hope you are very particular as to the society you keep, and, above all, that you do not neglect the duties of religion; for what does it profit if we gain the whole · world and lose our own souls. I trust you go regularly to church, and read a chapter or two of the Word before you lie down to sleep.

"I have no news, as we live the same quiet

uneventful life as when you were with us. I take great care of your rabbits and pigeons. Both of them have increased to a troublesome degree, but I dislike, for your sake, to have any of them killed. Your father is busy rigging a new flag-staff, and says it would take half-an-hour to get his hands clean, but he is to write you by next post.—With warmest love, I am your affectionate mother, "Mary Powderhorn.

"P.S.—Bella Daisy, who comes often to see me, sends her kind regards. She says that ostriches are abundant in Buenos Ayres, and she would like so much to get a feather for her hat. If you happen to see any of them roosting, please pull a feather out of the tail and send it by post. It would be as well to pull out the whole tail, as I should like a feather too. But do not climb too high lest you fall; you were always too fearless.

"M. P."

On perusing this letter, and contrasting his position, as it existed in his mother's imagination, with the stern reality, Frank's feelings overcame him, and he leant his head and shoulder against a paradise-tree, and sank into despair for a little. He had borne his misfortunes bravely until then; but he was so anxious to perform all that his parents expected of him, and he saw so clearly the difficulties that lay between him and the accomplishment of his aspirations. He knew that there was no means of making money in the province but by sheep, and that he would be too young for some years to be intrusted with the charge of a flock on thirds, and that it would be an up-hill struggle even after that initiatory step was attained. He saw but hopeless poverty before him as far as his eye could reach. But he was too young and too courageous withal to be long depressed by the prospect; so he shook off his troubles "like dew-drops from the lion's mane," and walked into the rancho, where he found Andrew reading "Don Quixote" in the original, or Burns's poems; for these works, and the Bible, were all the books he possessed. He glanced

at Frank as he entered, and said hastily: "No bad news from home, I hope? I am glad of that—Caramba! This is a triste life for you and for me too, for that matter. I have lived here for six years like a hermit, keeping a flock of sheep on thirds, and I am as poor to-day as I was at the beginning. When I was at home 'I aye had a saxpence under my thumb,' and never owed any man a penny. Now I am in debt to Juan Antonio at the almacen, and cannot get out of it. True, I have as much carne as I can use, and I have three horses: but I would rather have a plate of good porridge than the best mutton ever I saw, and I have been happier on my own feet than ever I was in the saddle. However, grumbling is useless, and I must keep to the road I have taken and make the best of it.

> "' Come, firm Resolve, take thou the van, Thou stalk o' carl-hemp in man; And let us mind faint heart ne'er wan A lady fair. Wha does the utmost that he can, Will whyles do mair.'

[&]quot;But cheer up, Frank! you bring in the

sheep, and I'll stew the carne, and after supper we'll have a game of draughts. Blessed be the man, as Sancho says of sleep, who invented it; he ought, if every one got his due, to have a monument erected to his memory as big as that in the Plaza Victoria in Buenos Ayres, and of marble instead of stucco."

It was now winter (June), and a keen searching wind blew from the south that pierced through the thickest poncho. Andrew piled high the bosta and made a cheerful fire, and cutting some pieces from the carcass of a fat sheep that hung on the wall, put them into a stew-pan with plenty of tallow, and set them on the fire.

The supper of tea, biscuits, and stewed mutton was on the table when Frank returned; and, as this was the first regular meal either had partaken of all day, both ate voraciously. Andrew seldom took the trouble of kindling a fire until evening, but blunted his appetite with a biscuit and mate in the morning and at noon. Although he sometimes grumbled,

no one was more suited to the country and his position in it than he. He was upwards of six feet in height, and tough and hardy, although somewhat lanky. His face expressed courage and resolution, and he was not one to be imposed on or intimidated.

Whilst the two sat at supper the dogs outside began to bark furiously with deepmouthed voices, and Andrew rose quickly and listened. "I hear the sound of horses' hoofs," he said; "who can be coming here at this time of night?" Presently a voice outside was heard shouting "Ave Maria!" when the shepherd went out, and returned in a minute or two followed by three Gauchos in ponchos and chiripas, with rebenques dangling from the right hand. The rebenque is a whip with a broad strap of raw hide instead of a thong, and a short massive handle of silver or other metal. This instrument can inflict severe punishment on a horse; and when the strap fails, the heavy handle is used to strike a refractory beast, one blow between the ears being sufficient to bring him to the

ground. These men wore botas del potro—boots made of the skin taken from the legs of a horse, which require no sewing.

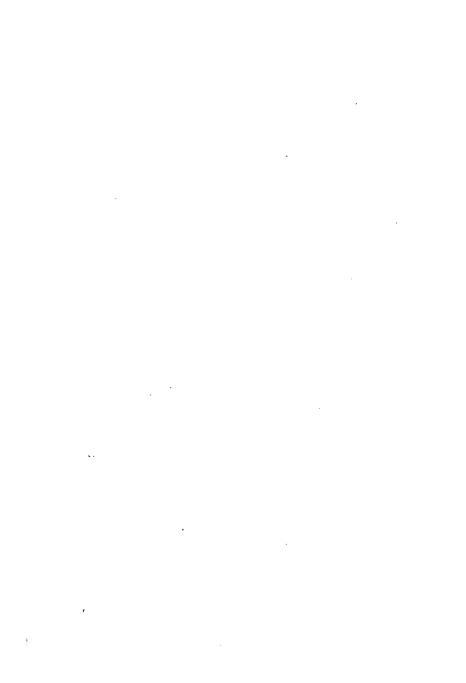
They were very polite, and sat smoking their cigarillas until the mutton which Andrew stewed for them was ready; and having devoured their supper, they rose, hat in hand, and with a bow walked out, saying, "Doy a Usted un milion de gracias, señor;" and although the night was bitterly cold, they lay down to sleep, covered by their ponchos, in the open veranda. Andrew barred them out with a smile, and said, "They are safest there." The natives are remarkably hardy, and often sleep in the open air when the ground is covered by hoar frost.

These Gauchos lingered at the puesto until the afternoon, drinking mate and playing at a game with a bone. On leaving, one of them endeavoured to carry off a bridle, which Frank took from him without any ceremony, telling him that he was a ladrón, which means a thief, and that the bridle belonged to Andrew. The Gaucho looked daggers and kissed his knife



A FATAL ENCOUNTER.

Page 113.



(which is the way the natives vow revenge), but rode off in silence after his companions.

Two days after this, when Frank was shooting ducks about a mile from the house, he noticed a man riding towards him with his lasso in his hand, and in a few seconds afterwards he recognized him as the Gaucho who had tried to steal the bridle. Seeing that the man was about to lasso him. Frank, in the impulse of the moment, raised his gun and fired both barrels. Although the piece was only loaded with No. 4 shot, the Gaucho seemed to be seriously wounded; for he raised both his hands, and fell back over the tail of the horse, which wheeled round and galloped off, with the lasso trailing behind him. Frank, when the danger was over, felt shocked at having committed such a deed, even in self defence, and ran up to the wounded man to assist him. But the poor wretch was in a desperate condition. Blood was pouring like a stream from his left side, where his shirt was all riddled by the shot. He suffered great pain, and writhed and rolled amongst the grass, tossing his arms

about, and finally, raising himself like an arch, with only his head and heels resting on the ground, fell flat on his back, and expired. The diabolical scowl with which he had regarded Frank gradually faded away, and his eyes grew glassy, and seemed to be fixed on some celestial vision.

For several minutes Frank stood petrified with horror, gazing at the greenish-white face and strange glassy eyes of the dead man, and then turned and ran to the puesto with the speed of an ostrich. Andrew, who was tightening the girth of his horse, looked up with surprise when Frank bounded to the front of the cottage, and exclaimed, "Caramba! what's the matter?"

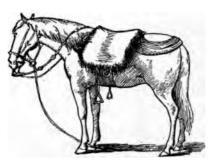
"I have shot a man," answered Frank.

"How ?—why?" interrogated Andrew.

Frank, when he had regained his breath, explained all that had happened, and added that he would go immediately and deliver himself up to the *Iuez*.

"Que hombre!" said Andrew; "you must not think of such a thing. You have done nothing but what was right; the Gaucho would have killed you without remorse, if you had not been quicker than he."

Next day, although Frank avoided the scene of the rencounter, he could not help glancing towards the spot; but he saw nothing except a few chimangos hovering over it. A few weeks afterwards Andrew rode to the place, but not a vestige of the Gaucho was left. Probably the bones had been carried off by the biscachas. "Well, there is one thief and murderer less in the camp," was Andrew's comment on this tragic occurrence; but it was long before Frank could reflect on it without a shudder.

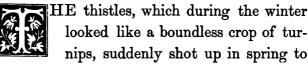


HORSE, WITH NATIVE SADDLE, LASSO, ETC.

CHAPTER VIII.

SPRING—SHEEF-SHEARING AND AMUSEMENTS OF THE NATIVES—FRANK FEELS

A DESIRE TO WANDER—MAKES A CANOE, AND SAILS IN A LAGUNA—
CAPITAL SPORT.



a height of nine or ten feet, and formed jungles which were impenetrable to man and beast. The aspect of the camp was completely changed, and the old landmarks were hid from view, excepting, perhaps, some huge and solitary ombu. The trunk of this tree often attains a great girth, and its branches are massive and numerous; but it is only useful for shade and as a landmark, and its timber will not burn, and is so soft that it can be cut with a spade. The traveller finds shelter for himself and horse under its umbra-

geous foliage during the glare of noon, foxes secure a retreat under the roots, and caranchos build their nests at the top. These trees are few and far between; and some farmers, who entertain the suspicion that a Gaucho may hide in the branches and lasso the sheep that rest below, have no great favour for them.

On the 22nd of October sheep-shearing commenced on the estancia, and Andrew was ordered by the patron to bring over his flock, and Frank went with him. All the shepherds brought their flocks in rotation. Some thirty hands were engaged for the work, the majority of them natives, and a considerable proportion of them women. They had assembled on the previous evening, bringing their children, horses, and dogs with them. The females and children slept in a rough rancho, and the men on saddles and sheep-skins outside. Bob Brine (a runaway sailor) acted as butcher, six fat sheep being killed every morning for the day's consumption.

The shearing ground consisted of a fenced enclosure about fifty feet long and fourteen

wide. In this compartment, protected by an awning from the increasing fervour of the sun, the shearers laboured. Two or three men were employed in catching the sheep, which were confined in pens alongside, binding their feet with straps of skin, and laying them handy for the shearers; and they found it hot work to supply the demand. The patron or master moved silently but vigilantly amongst the busy throng, giving a tally for every fleece that was taken off, and cries of "Lata, lata, patron," were heard every minute or two above the clink of sheep-shears, from voices male and female. A boy with a bucket of tar also threaded his way through the crowd, to anoint the wounds that the rapid shears had made in the shrinking skins of the sheep. He answered to the name of "Medico" (doctor).

The women as well as men employed in shearing lighten their labours with a cigarilla, and mate for all the crew is supplied at intervals. Two hours are allowed for dinner and siesta. At sunset, when work is suspended for the

day, the natives cast off their greasy garments, and make themselves apparently tidy and Then one plays on the guitar, to the monotonous strumming of which others get up and dance with great gravity. Songs are sung in an unearthly falsetto voice, which is probably like the howling of a wolf with the toothache. Some of their sports are childish. A man acts a wild horse, and with his hands resting on his knees, imitates all the motions of the animal; and men and boys mount his back in succession, and try to keep their seats there, whilst he rears, and kicks, and leaps, and uses every means to throw his rider, which is no easy matter: but when he succeeds, he is rewarded by the rapturous applause of the delighted audience, some of whom are so overpowered by mirth that they are fain to lean against walls and door-posts, whilst tears roll down their tawny cheeks!

About twenty thousand sheep were shorn, and Frank made a little money, with which he bought some articles of clothing. From Andrew he received a present of an old Spanish

fowling-piece, with real twist barrels. He now felt rich, and resolved to gratify a desire he had long felt to see some more of the country. He intended at first to pay a visit to Tom Swingtrees, by whose glowing letter he had been induced to come to Buenos Ayres; but on inquiry he ascertained that that buoyant and unsteady gentleman, having lost about one-third of his flock by a storm, had left the country in disgust, and gone to the Falkland Islands, in the full expectation that he would make a fortune there.

Frank returned to Andrew's puesto in a very aimless and restless state of mind. His eyes were often fixed upon a laguna, or lake, that was near the puesto, and which stretched away like a broad river in a south-westerly direction until it was lost on the horizon. In seasons of drought the water all evaporated, but in general there was more than enough to float a boat with two or three feet to spare, Frank often asked how far the laguna went, but was always answered with a "Quien sabe?" (Who knows?) He felt a great desire to

explore it, although he did not know how he was to get a boat. Suitable wood was not to be had there, or he would have tried to construct one, having observed the way the work was done in builders' sheds in Sandyport. At length he thought that a canoe made of a horse's hide would answer the purpose. Andrew laughed heartily at this project, but gave Frank The latter then went to work and a skin. made a frame of cane, which grew in hedgerows around the corral, lashing the joints firmly with thongs of leather. The hide he laid in the sun, and basted it well with mares' grease, so as to keep it from being softened by the water. Then he stretched it on the frame, and sewed it on with thongs. The neck of the horse he bent up, and put a horn on the end to make a neat prow. He put in a thwart and flooring of cane. A bit of an old manga did for a sail. He made a mast and yard of cane. Then he made two paddles of cane with the shoulder-blades of a bullock at the end for One of these was to be used as a blades. rudder when the canoe was under sail. Four

short ribs of an ox tied to the end of a stick he made for a grapnel, with a strip of raw hide for a cable.

The canoe being finished, Frank, with part of the money he had earned at the shearing, bought some biscuits and yerba, and a teakettle and a pan, as well as two pounds of powder, some shot, and percussion caps. got half a sheep from Andrew, which he salted. About the end of November, which is summer there, he was ready for his excursion, and Andrew pulled the canoe down to the laguna with a lasso fastened to his horse. Frank and he bade each other adios, and the former pushed off his canoe and stepped on board; but the vessel was found to be too crank, and, rocking like a cradle, finally capsized, and threw him and his provisions into the water before he had gone three fathoms from the shore! He leapt up, dripping, and set her right; but she would persist in falling over whenever he stepped on board. He was much disappointed, and the way in which Andrew stood and laughed on the bank added to his vexation.

There was no alternative but to drag the cranky craft back to the puesto, and for two or three days Frank gave up the idea of exploring the laguna. At the end of that time he began to ask himself, "Is there no way of making the canoe sit steady on the water? Suppose I widened and flattened the bottom—Eureka! that would do, I believe." He took off the skin and altered the frame and covered it again. Excepting his powder, which poured out of the flask like ink, and his matches, his provisions were none the worse of this immersion. He procured a new supply of the articles that had been damaged, and on the 2nd of December he was again ready for his expedition.

The canoe was pulled to the laguna as before, and Andrew stood grinning on the bank, expecting to see the same accident repeated; but he was mistaken, for the canoe floated away quite steadily, and the wind being astern, Frank set his sail and glided off at a rapid rate, steering with a paddle. The stream grew wide although shallow, and he never felt

so happy as he now did, sitting in the bottom of the canoe, with the blue sky above him and the blue water around. He had not gone far when he perceived a flock of black-necked swans floating ahead. He seized his gun, and when he had got within shot, fired, and had the satisfaction of seeing one fluttering and struggling in the water, whilst the rest took to flight. He steered up to the wounded bird, and grasped it by the neck; but it struck such heavy blows with its wings that he was afraid his canoe would be knocked to pieces. But he succeeded in holding on until he drew his knife and cut its head off against the gunnel, when he drew the bird on board.

At noon he paddled on shore and pulled up his canoe, and gathered fuel to make a fire to cook his dinner. This consisted of a steak or two cut from the breast of the swan, along with a biscuit and matè. He then pushed off again, and sat dozing in the canoe, which now went very slowly, as the wind had fallen off. On the low banks of the laguna he would sometimes see a traveller or two cantering

along, dressed in his striped poncho and glittering with silver, who would stop for a minute or two and stare, and canter on again, driving half-a-dozen spare horses before him; or it might be a shepherd riding near his flock, or sometimes a puesto or estancia house; but in general the scene was solitary on either hand.

When the sun had set, he glided up to a flock of ducks, and, firing into it, killed one; two others, although wounded, managing to flutter on the surface of the water to the bank. Concluding that he would never be in want of fresh meat, he threw the salt mutton overboard, that it might not encumber the boat. He paddled to the shore, and, kindling a fire of bones, roasted a leg of the swan, and made mate for supper. Rolling himself up in the sail, he lay down under the shelter of a great ombu tree and fell asleep; but at dawn he was awakened by something cold poking about his face and throat, and, starting up, found it was the nose of a fox. At the same time he saw two other foxes running off with the duck and the remains of the swan he had left in the (650)

canoe. He leapt to the canoe for his gun, but before he could get it the animals had retreated into holes under the root of the tree, and had carried the meat with them. He took mate and a biscuit for breakfast.

The 3rd was dead calm, and he was obliged to paddle all day. He saw some birds, but could not get within shot,—probably because they were alarmed at the sound of the paddles. He regretted, his appetite being keen, that he had thrown the salt mutton overboard.

On the 4th he shot an owl, and went on shore and roasted it; but it was uncommonly tough.

On the 5th, whilst he was preparing dinner, a herd of oxen suddenly made a rush at him with blowing nostrils and tails in the air, and he had just time to push off the canoe and paddle beyond their reach. He was obliged to wait for about two hours before they went away and allowed him to get the kettle he had left on the fire. He then paddled to the opposite bank and roasted a tira-tera, which, with mate, made a good dinner. In the evening, being afraid of oxen, he anchored in

the middle of the laguna in about two fathoms of water, and coiled himself up in the bottom of the canoe, and fell asleep under the sail; but a furious wind arose during the night, and when he awoke he found the canoe rolling over the plain, with himself in her, like a barrel before the wind. By a great effort he got out, and held on to the canoe until the squall abated, when he dragged her back to the water, picking up his gun and other articles by the way. This accident made him resolve never to anchor out any more at night, but to seek for more sheltered spots to sleep in.



BISCACHA

CHAPTER IX.

FRANK IS CAPTURED AND CARRIED OFF BY INDIANS.

N the 6th there was again a light breeze astern, and he glided down right into the midst of a large flock

of geese and ducks, and shot three of the former, and feasted for as many days; but two of the birds he was obliged to throw overboard on the 9th, as they had begun to decay.

On the 10th the wind blew from the southwest, so that his sail was of no service, and he was obliged to paddle. The country on both sides was like a desert, and a range of hills was visible in the far distance on the port side. In the forenoon he noticed a number of ostriches on the plain to the right; but they ran off like the wind when he paddled to the side of the laguna in the hope of getting a shot. He

found a number of stray eggs on the shore, but unfortunately they were all rotten and unfit for food. Some of the shells had been chipped and sucked empty, probably by foxes.

In the afternoon the canoe glided almost within shot of a large flock of flamingoes, which were wading at the edge of the laguna, near a thicket of tall canes; but when Frank laid down his paddle to grasp his gun, they arose, and, with outstretched feet and wings, flapped slowly away. Their brilliant plumage, crimson above and black beneath, looked lovely against the dark blue sky.

On the 11th the wind was a-beam, but by making a lee-board of one of the paddles Frank went rapidly along under sail, and kept well off the lee-shore. On the 12th he shot seven ducks, but was obliged to throw five overboard on the 14th, as they had begun to smell, and attracted clouds of flies.

This life was too pleasant to last, and on the evening of the 16th, as the canoe was sailing along with a light breeze, and Frank sat admiring the setting sun and enjoying the

cool air, he observed seven horsemen galloping towards him on the starboard side. They carried long spears in their hands, and bawled some words to him from the bank which he did not understand. His first impulse was to paddle to the opposite shore; but before he had time to do so two of the men spurred their horses into the water, and one of them threw a lasso over the prow of the canoe and dragged her in a minute to the shore. Frank then, to his horror, became aware that he was a prisoner in the hands of the Indians.

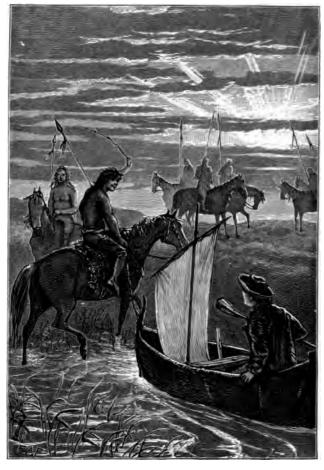
They were small but wiry-looking men, with copper-coloured skins, and with coarse black hair, held back by a thong, hanging over the shoulders. Their faces were flat, with high cheek-bones, and with a cruel, repulsive expression. Two of them wore ponchos, but the rest were half naked. One of them, without any difficulty, lifted Frank and made him sit before him on the horse. Another took the gun (which had real twist barrels), powder-flask, &c., and the party set off at a hard gallop, in a south-westerly direction, across the desert

plain. In an hour they came up to a larger party that was driving a great number of horses and cattle before them, when Frank was ordered to mount a bare-backed nag, which had a garter tied around the under jaw instead of a bridle. The moon arose, and the troop rode on at a steady pace. For a time Frank, although anxious and depressed in spirit, suffered no bodily pain; but after a few hours the hard jolting on a horse without a saddle began to be very distressing and at length excruciating. He thought in his agony that day would never dawn nor the fearful ride come to an end.

A little after daybreak they reached an encampment, where a number of toldos, or tents made of skins, were pitched, with fires burning at the open end. Here the party dismounted, and Frank was so stiff and exhausted that he fell heavily on the ground, which set the Indians in a roar, the women especially being much amused at the accident. He was then stripped of all his clothes, except shirt and trousers, and an old guanaco capa given him

in exchange. A great number of fierce-looking mongrels prowled about the encampment, and some of the Indian boys urged them on to bite him. Altogether, he never felt so wretched and hopeless in his life.

The savages forthwith slaughtered two or three mares that they had stolen in their foray to the north, and drank the hot blood, seasoned with salt. Pieces of the flesh were thrown into the fire, and devoured before they were even heated. The bones they flung, by way of joke, at Frank, who sat stupified with fatigue and misery at the side of the toldo. The women gave bits of raw liver and lungs, &c., to their infants to suck, these parts being considered great delicacies. In the evening a man tossed a piece of half-roasted horse-flesh to Frank, who, suffering from the unendurable pangs of hunger, ate it greedily. To give a minute and circumstantial account of all that the poor boy suffered at the hands of these brutal savages would be painful as well as superfluous. fice it that they tantalized and tormented him as a cat does a mouse, without any other



CAPTURED BY INDIANS.

Page 130.

• . · . •

apparent motive than to gratify their malignant hearts.

Frank had fallen into the power of a tribe of Pampas Indians, whose head-quarters are to the north of the Rio Negro. They are not very religious, but they believe in a god (Ounetrou) and a devil (Gualichu). They have little reverence for either, except during a storm, when they imagine Gualichu is in a rage, and that the thunder is his voice; and in their terror they huddle together in their toldos and hide their faces with their hands. But when the tempest is over they recover their courage and laugh at their demon. They also believe in witchcraft and the second sight. To them, as to the Indians of North America, the tobacco pipe is sacred, and their devotions are performed by means of it. Sometimes the men assemble in a toldo, and lie on their stomachs in a circle, with their capas drawn over their heads. The pipe, which is made of a hard stone, is then filled with scrapings of a certain kind of wood mixed with tobacco, and is lighted and passed around, each in rotation taking a long draught and swallowing the smoke, which is allowed to escape slowly from the mouth and nose. The worshipper, or smoker, is presently thrown into violent convulsions, shakes and trembles from head to foot, and grunts, groans, and howls in a fearful manner. Soon the whole assembly are in the same condition, which continues for some time, when they all take a draught of water out of a cow's horn, and worship is over. It is remarkable that tobacco has a more powerful effect on the aboriginal Americans than on Europeans; and this is likewise the case with mate, the excessive indulgence in which by the natives is said to produce delirium tremens, whilst a European can drink any quantity with impunity.

The Pampas Indians spend the greater part of their time, when at home, in gambling and in making saddles, bridles, bolas, lassos, &c. The women perform all the drudgery, such as cooking and putting up and taking down the toldos, or skin tents. They make capas, or mantles, from the skin of the young guanaco,

which forms the chief, and in many cases the only, article of clothing worn by either sex. It is also the principal article of commerce, being held in great esteem, not only by the different tribes of Indians, but also by the people of Buenos Ayres. The most important occupation of the men is hunting ostriches and guanacos, with which that region abounds. The game is either hunted down by dogs or caught by the bolas.

The bolas, as used by boys, have been already described. Those used by men only differ in being on a larger scale. One cannot help admiring the ingenious implements that have been invented by savages in all parts of the world, and contrasting them with the works of white men. The savage seems to be guided by instinct in constructing his tools. He makes his canoe just as the bee makes its comb or the bird its nest, and, as far as it goes, attains perfection at once. It is questionable whether the white man, placed in similar circumstances, would have made so perfect a work as the savage; but then from generation

to generation the former improves on the first rude effort, until from bows and arrows he arrives at breech-loading rifles and colossal cannon—from rough dug-out canoes to iron-clads propelled by steam. Led by reason, and not by unerring instinct, he walks and stumbles along the endless road of improvement with darkness before him, but the way behind illuminated by the lamps that he himself has kindled. For him there is no rest. Like a boat rowing against the wind, if he stops he is blown back.



GRENNOW-AGED SIXTEEN

CHAPTER X.

FRANK IS GIVEN TO THE PATAGONIANS, AND IS HELD CAPTIVE BY THEM,

RANK had lived for about three weeks amongst the Pampas Indians when a party of Patagonians, fifteen

in number, called at the encampment with guanaco capas for sale. The cacique, whose name was Catamara, was a man about six feet four inches in stature, and of a breadth in proportion. All the party were over six feet. They had large flat faces, hooked noses, and high cheek-bones. They had long coarse hair on their heads, but none on their chins, which were sharp and prominent. Their eyes were black, and had an expression of ferocity, tempered by stupidity. They were dressed in skins, and carried boleadoras around their waists, and a lasso was coiled upon the back

of each of their horses. These men had been making a circuit, and had already bartered a quantity of furs for horses, a troop of which they had with them. They sold some capas to the Indians they had now come to visit, receiving some mares in exchange. Frank, apparently as a jest, was handed over to them. The strangers were hospitably received, and the women, as an especial treat, made a dish for them of horses' livers, kidneys, and lungs, cut into small pieces, and served up in raw blood—a dish which was much appreciated.

The entertainment over, the Patagonians left the encampment, and, driving a troop of horses before them, rode off to the south. They took Frank with them. After a gallop of five or six hours, they came to a river, probably the Rio Negro, which was of no great breadth, but dark and deep, with precipitous banks on both sides. Here there was some difficulty in getting the unmounted horses to enter the water; but by dint of shouting and waving of lassos they were all driven in, and swam safely to the opposite side, the Indians floating above

their horses and holding on to the mane. Frank managed to keep his seat, although it was a great hazard. He was now in Patagonia, and so much the farther from any hope of escape. After a gallop of about two hours' duration, the party reached the encampment of the tribe, which is called the Retches, being a sub-tribe of the Twelches.

His arrival excited some interest. Boys struck him with sogas, or strips of raw hide, and set the dogs at him. Even the womensome of them ugly old hags-gave him a buffet on the ear, or spat in his face as they passed; and he was obliged to receive these insults meekly, as any show of resentment would only have provoked greater cruelty. Some of the mares were slaughtered, and fires were kindled to prepare the feast. Catamara had six wives. and all of them were busy preparing his meal and waiting on him. When he had gorged himself on half-raw horse-flesh and blood, he sat on an ox skull at the front of the toldo. and in a state of great contentment called for his guitar, which was made of the shell of an armadillo, with ostrich sinews for strings, and in a horrible guttural voice howled a song, his six wives joining in the chorus, and beating an accompaniment on a kind of tambourine.

Whilst these feastings and festivities were proceeding, poor Frank sat all forlorn at the back of the toldo; nor had any one the slightest compassion on him excepting Grennow, the daughter of the cacique—a girl about sixteen years of age-who brought him a piece of roasted horse-flesh, which he ate voraciously, after having kissed her hand to express his gratitude; for he did not know a word of the strange guttural language which these Indians spoke. This poor girl was pretty when her face was free from paint, although when in full dress it was striped like a zebra! But every country has its own fashions, and those of civilized nations are often as irrational and tasteless as those of savages. Her eyes were large and shaded by long thick black lashes; and although her mouth was also large, this blemish allowed her ivory teeth to be seen to greater advantage. Her hair was as long

and strong as the tail of a black horse: it was plaited in two tails that reached half way to the ground. She was dressed in a single garment, but often wore a fine guanaco cloak, fastened with a silver brooch.

After a few days, the encampment was moved some thirty leagues further south; the labour of taking down the large toldos, and packing the posts and skins on horses, as well as the care of the children, being left to the women. The men went on before hunting guanacos, ostriches, deer, hares, pumas, aguaras, and any other game to be found in that region. And Frank accompanied them, and in the excitement of the chase almost forgot at times the wretchedness of his condition and the hopelessness of his prospects. He resolved, as the best way of conciliating the savages, to adopt, as far as possible, their manners and customs, to study their language, and to practise the lasso and bolas. This programme he endeavoured to carry out when the tribe was again settled. He drove in the horses in the morning, and so tried to please the men; and by running to the spring for water he endeavoured to win the favour of the women. He practised the lasso and bolas with the boys, and soon learned to throw both almost as well as any of them. From Grennow he acquired a little knowledge of the language, although his manner of pronunciation caused much amusement to the tribe. He found her more patient in teaching him, and he did not care although she laughed at his attempts.

The Retches are passionately fond of music, and play on a variety of instruments. They make guitars or mandolins from the shell of the armadillo, whistles with three holes from the shank-bone of the guanaco, harps and fiddles out of horses' skulls, a rib with hair tied tightly across serving for a bow. The skin of the wild cat stretched upon a hoop they use as a drum or tambourine. Although the noise produced by an orchestra performing on instruments of that sort is horrible to an ear unaccustomed to it, the Indians listen with deep attention to the discord, and dance and howl with delight.

These savages are very kind to their children, when they are able-bodied and well-formed. The infant is tied upon a small ladder, instead of a cradle, and wrapped in sheep-skins. The ladder is slung by four cords above the bed of the parents at night, so that the latter can rock it without being disturbed themselves; and is placed upright against a post of the tent during the day when the weather is rainy. When the weather is warm the child is allowed to sprawl on a sheep-skin in the sun outside the toldo. But infants altogether deformed are smothered, or dashed upon the ground and killed, immediately after birth. The children, who in summer are to be seen toddling about the encampment entirely naked, look very comical. Their black eyes are like big beads, and their heads seem too large for their bodies; they are bandy-legged and pot-bellied, although every mother thinks her own imp a cherub. They are placed upon horseback, and learn to ride before they can walk; and when mere infants they begin to throw the bolas and lasso at dogs.

When Frank had been about three weeks at the encampment, two men happened to quarrel at some game they were playing, and from words they came to knives. Wrapping their cloaks round their left arms by way of shields, they thrust and parried with great dexterity. One of them received a deep slash down his face, from the brow to the chin; but at the same instant he thrust his knife into the stomach of his antagonist, who died almost immediately. All the women came shricking and howling out of the toldos. The dead man was dressed in his best clothes—a fine guanaco mantle being fastened with a silver brooch around his shoulders: his face was painted with stripes of red and yellow. Next day the deceased was placed upon his best horse, whilst a man rode behind and supported the body. All the women followed in the rear howling and screaming, and crying, "Why did you die?" After them came the men, all on horseback, with their faces painted black with white spots, and in gloomy silence.

When the melancholy procession had reached

the bank of the stream, about a mile distant from the toldos, a stone was removed, and disclosed the entrance to a large cave under an eminence, into which the corpse was carried and placed in a sitting posture on the ground. The cavern—the end of which was hid in darkness-contained a vast multitude of human bodies, which had been preserved from putrefaction apparently by some peculiar property in the air. Some of those that had been knocked over were again placed in a sitting posture, and appeared, from the ease with which they could be lifted, to be as dry and light as cork. All the faces were painted; and all the men had their lassos, and bolas, bridles, &c., beside them. The female corpses were dressed in their mantles, with brooches and ear-rings of silver. A few children were seated amongst the adults. The lips of all had shrunk and exposed the teeth, which gave them a ghastly grin. Their eyes were open, but like gray stone. Frank shuddered as he peered through the entrance at this silent assembly. On the walls of the cave he noticed strange

carvings of beasts and birds, with marks like letters. Possibly some of the bodies may have been sitting there for a thousand years.

All the living came out of the cave, and mounting their horses rode in silence back to the encampment; and on their arrival forthwith slaughtered all the horses belonging to the deceased, the flesh of which they ate. They were careful not to let the dogs approach during this banquet, and buried all the bones, for some superstitious reason.



GAUCHO BOY.

CHAPTER XI.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY—ITS NATURAL HISTORY—SUFFERINGS OF FRANK—KINDNESS OF GRENNOW.



HE country in which the tribe had now encamped was desert, although there were fertile spots. The soil

consisted chiefly of sand and rock, covered with saltpetre and pools of brackish water. Trees there were none; but bushes were plentiful, and afforded shelter to the game with which the district abounded. Besides large animals, there were great quantities of armadillos (of four species), tortoises, foxes, skunks, weasels, and nutrias or otters. Properly speaking, the latter is an exaggerated form of water-rat. Strange to say, the biscacha, with which Frank was so familiar in Buenos Ayres, he did not see a sample of in Patagonia. Amongst the birds there were

eagles, vultures, falcons, partridges, flamingoes, and pigeons.

There was, indeed, a superabundance of food for every one, although Frank had frequently to endure the pangs of hunger; for the brutal Indians would not only refuse to give him a share of their meat, but would even take the armadillos and tortoises he chanced to find from him and roast and eat them themselves. But for Grennow he would probably have died of starvation. That kind-hearted girl would manage in a cunning way to keep him supplied with meat when she knew that he was in want. She was frequently taunted by the other females for her friendship to the white boy, and she was more than once knocked down and kicked by her father the cacique for the same reason: but neither insults nor blows made any alteration in her conduct. Frank was seldom allowed to enter the toldos, but was obliged to sleep on the ground outside.

Although the men could work beautifully in leather, and made halters, bridles, and lassos which would have excited admiration anywhere, they could do very little with iron. They used to make rough knives and points for their spears from pieces of hoops, and other thin scraps of that metal; but they had not sufficient knowledge to soften it by heating. They beat it in a cold state with timid strokes on a stone, using a smaller stone for a hammer. Frank, who had often seen blacksmiths working at home, thought he could improve on the Indian method, and in the absence of the men heated a scrap in the fire and beat it with a bolt into the shape of a knife blade, and then sharpened it on a stone. He twisted a thong of raw hide around it for a handle, and slung it to his waist. This knife was seen, and so much admired by the Indians that one of them took it from him. Others who had no knives (for many had knives of steel that had come from Buenos Ayres) ordered him to make knives for them, and brought him scraps of iron that appeared to have belonged to a ship. He began to feel a pleasure in this sort of work, and toiled from morning to night in the hope of conciliating his cruel masters. The

cacique, who had until now treated him like a dog, found some amusement in watching him at his work, and would even throw a bone to him when he himself was gorging.

The straight bolt being inconvenient, Frank by beating it and bending the end made a small hammer, which answered much better. Amongst the scraps of iron he found a broken file, which proved of great use. By means of it he made a small saw out of a hoop, and this enabled him to make horn handles to his knives. The horn he softened by roasting it in the fire. Day after day he spent in making knives and spear-heads. The work was very clumsily done, for he had no tools, and had had no practice; but his ability in this line raised him very much in the opinion of the Indians, and unfortunately made them watch him with greater vigilance lest he might try to escape. They, however, treated him with greater kindness; or rather with less brutality, for to be kind is not in their nature. They permitted him to put up a small tent, under which he could crawl when the nights were cold or rainy.

He frequently examined with great interest the bits of iron that had been given to him, feeling convinced that some of them had been the bolts and nails of a ship; and this conclusion made his heart throb with hope, and his brain speculate how far the encampment was from the coast. He thought if he could only get there he might have a chance of escape. But he concluded that it would be prudent in the meantime to feign contentment, and to make no attempt to flee. Why he was kept in captivity he could not for some time understand: but from certain words that fell from Catamara, and which he understood, he discovered that that cacique expected he would get a ransom for him some day.

On his arrival at the encampment, the dogs would bark furiously, and fly at him in a pack if he attempted to go a hundred yards from the toldos; but in a short time they would lick his hand when he sat at work, and trot quietly at his heels wherever he went, and sleep around his little tent at night. By chatting to them and patting them he gained their affections,

and made them fond of him, although he had no meat to give them.

About the beginning of April (for as he kept no journal the date is uncertain) the Retches broke up their camp, although there was no scarcity of game, and moved about a hundred miles to the south, and settled upon the bank of a stream. The country here was desolate in the extreme. There was no vegetation excepting a few stunted bushes, clumps of thistles, and tufts of coarse grass; yet guanacos and ostriches were numerous, and many were killed and brought to the encampment almost every day. The armadillos were taking their winter sleep under ground.

Boulders, pebbles, and fragments of rock, were scattered over the dismal plain; and the wind, often accompanied by sleet, snow, and hail, blew keen and cutting from the west and south. Not far from the toldos a curious phenomenon was to be observed. In a marshy spot great volumes, or rather balls, of dense smoke would burst out of the soil at regular intervals, and occasionally tongues of flame

would shoot up even through the water. If the ear was placed upon a stone, terrific explosions, hissings, and rumblings might be heard deep under ground. It seemed as if fiends were engaged in a great battle there. The earth itself shook as if with fear. We live in a strange world, although we seldom think of it.

With nothing but a hide to cover him, Frank suffered dreadfully from cold during the night, and was glad when the dogs crawled in beside him. The affection of Grennow, although it had often preserved him from dying of hunger, was not an unmixed blessing, as it aroused the hatred of a young man who was her admirer. This fellow never missed an opportunity of maltreating and insulting him.



FRANK'S TENT IN PATAGONIA.

CHAPTER XIL

THE GUANACO AND OSTRICH—FRANK'S SUFFERINGS AND PLANS—HE MAKES
ANOTHER CANOE, BUT UNDER GREAT DIFFICULTIES, AND SUCCEEDS IN
ESCAPING.

REQUENTLY he joined the men in hunting for guanacos and ostriches. The guanaco is a quadruped about

four feet in height, and covered with reddishyellow wool, which is woven into ponchos in Chili. It runs with great rapidity, and neighs like a horse. Great numbers flock together. The flesh is excellent, and the Indians cover their tents with the skins, which the women sew together with sinews. The skins of young guanacos are made into mantles. Lassos and bridles are made of the skin of the neck, and boots from the hock of the old ones. The guanaco bites and kicks severely when he is brought to bay; but if he could be tamed, he would make a very good carriage horse, although he is more like a camel in appearance.

The ostrich of Patagonia differs from the ostrich of the pampas in being smaller and lighter in colour. It runs very swiftly, and with its wings closed. The skins are sewn into mantles by the women, and the flesh is greatly esteemed. The marrow and fat are carefully collected and preserved in skins. The sinews are used to make thongs for the bolas, &c. The wing feathers are of no great value, and only bring a dollar a pound in Buenos Ayres, not being so fine as those of the African ostrich.

The Patagonian she-ostrich begins to lay in September, and it is the male bird that hatches the eggs. A number of hens lay in the same nest, which is only a big hole in the ground. As it would be impossible, according to this system of domestic economy, for a hen to distinguish her own offspring, she does not trouble her head about them, but leaves the obliging husband not only to incubate, but to look after the family. Never was a more careless mother. When she has contributed

her share of eggs to the collection, she struts off and drops a number of others, as if by way of a joke, anywhere on the ground; and these foundlings, or hautchos, as the Indians call them, keep for a long time, and form delicate fare to people who are not fastidious as to their freshness. There is no male bird, except the ostrich, who takes the trouble to hatch the eggs and protect the young. The cock-pigeon, as every boy knows, provides for the young when they are about a month old, but then his wife is busy with a young family, and not like the she-ostrich, who walks off in search of amusement, very probably despising the poor drudge that had undertaken the duties she ought to have performed.

The poor he-ostrich, although he is very fond of running, and must feel the confinement dreadfully, is obliged to sit for twenty days before he has turned the eggs into chickens. Sometimes there are as many as forty eggs in one nest, but the average number is twenty. If an egg be broken or taken away, the indignant parent immediately discovers the fact, and

becomes so incensed and disgusted with the whole business, that he dances on the remainder and knocks them to pieces!

As winter advanced, the sufferings of Frank increased. With the skins of the necks of ostriches he made a sort of stockings, which kept his feet from being frost-bitten; but during the night he felt bitterly cold, and often thought he would perish before morning. It may be conjectured that he often pondered on the means of escaping. Masses of ice floated down the stream on the banks of which the Retches were encamped; and the idea often crossed his mind that it might be possible to float down the river on one of the large pieces, but the thought was at once dismissed as being only a circuitous way of committing suicide. Then he wondered how it would do to steal a horse and flee to the coast on it; but the project seemed equally impracticable, for he would have to traverse he knew not how many hundred miles of desert country, some of it probably inhabited by tribes as savage as that which held him captive. He would, besides, (650)

be again caught to a certainty, and treated with increased barbarity. To run off on foot was preposterous.

Winter came and went, and the Indians shifted their camp several times, but returned in spring to the same spot. The canoe in which he had cruised across the pampas, and which had borne him so pleasantly into his present miserable condition, often recurred to his mind, and a thousand times he wished he had such a craft on the stream. Brooding on this thought, he would often saunter along the bank, gazing at the ice which was borne on the current; and every hide he saw he unconsciously regarded as material for a canoe. About a month after the ostriches had begun to lay, he observed a horse-hide lying at the back of the toldos, and dragged it, by a few yards at a time, to the bank of the stream, and let it float down for about two hundred yards, secured to a soga which he held in his hand, to a place where there was a hole in the bank, in which he hid Hope began to revive in his breast. The it.

spare post of a toldo, about six feet long, he appropriated for a keel. The long ribs of a horse, disjointed from the back-bone, he took for timbers, which he lashed on to the keel with sogas of hide. One did for a stem. Not to arouse suspicion, he went to work in the moonlight, when all were asleep except the dogs, half a dozen of which would follow him; and although he could have dispensed with their company, he was thankful that they did not sound an alarm. In a week he had constructed a canoe that he thought would answer the purpose, although she was a clumsy craft.

On the following night Frank crept from his tent, and stole on tip-toe to his canoe with half a dozen dogs at his heels. He had managed to secure five ostrich eggs and a small skin of grease. He had also a thick slice of roasted horse-flesh; but a dog snatched the latter from his hand and ran off with it, pursued by the others. He stepped on board, and in an instant was floating with the current down the stream.

It was a beautiful night, but very cold. A

cutting wind blew over the desolate country from the west, and Frank, covered by his old guanaco capa, lay flat in the bottom of the canoe for shelter, with only the top of his head above the gunnel. The crescent moon, Southern Cross, and Magellan clouds, were sparkling in the vault of heaven. Borne upon the wind he heard with some alarm the howling of the dogs he had left behind him, and he expected every moment to see the Indians galloping along the bank in pursuit, and throwing their lassos or bolas at him. With a small paddle he had made from a horse's shoulder-blade he kept the canoe in the middle of the stream, when at any bend it was inclined to drift to the side. He must have floated fully fifty miles before daybreak, and his apprehensions of being pursued and recaptured began to abate. The country through which he passed was bleak and desolate, although not without patches of grass and stunted scrub. There were large tracts covered with stones and boulders. He saw a herd of guanacos in the distance, and also some ostriches.

In the forenoon he paddled to shore, where he ran about and danced for some time to warm his limbs, which were almost frozen to the bone; for, although the spring was far advanced, the wind was still very cold, and showers of sleet and snow were frequent. He began to feel some anxiety about his canoe, which, being made of uncured hide, became as soft and pliable in the bottom as tripe; but luckily the part above the waterline remained hard and stiff, else he would have been undone.

For breakfast he ate, or rather drank, about the half of an ostrich egg, which he had no means of cooking, and devoured a handful of grease with a hearty appetite; for

> "The art of our necessities is strange, And can make vile things precious."

In the afternoon he observed a large flock of Falkland Island geese in a pool at the side of the stream, and regretted that for want of a gun he was unable to secure any of them. Having had no rest during the previous night.

he fell asleep in the canoe, and when he awoke he found her lying aground on the bank at a bend of the stream. He pushed her off again, and struggled to keep awake by staring at the stars which glittered overhead; but he kept nodding now and again all night. The air was very cold. The second day passed like the first. On the afternoon of the third, he caught a sight of the dark blue sea! To an impartial mind his case would have appeared as desperate as ever; but he felt as buoyant as though he had been already safely on board a British vessel.

The coast was wild and rocky, with a small beach of sand between the cliffs and the tide. He noticed, whilst drawing up his canoe on the south bank, a large flock of sea-fowl that were feeding upon mussels at the mouth of the stream; and he gathered some of the shell-fish for supper, regretting that he had no means of kindling a fire that he might have roasted them. But they were in their raw state a delicious change of food to him. He drew the canoe into a cave in the cliff,

and slept in her during the night, sheltered from the wind and showers of sleet that came from the west. In the morning he breakfasted on eggs, grease, and mussels, and then ascended the cliff to look out for ships.



PELUDO, OR HAIRY ARMADILLO.

CHAPTER XIII.

PROVIDENTIAL RESCUE BY THE "LEVIATHAN"—FRANK FINDS HIS VOCATION
AT LAST—LIFE IN A WHALER—"THERE SHE BLOWS."



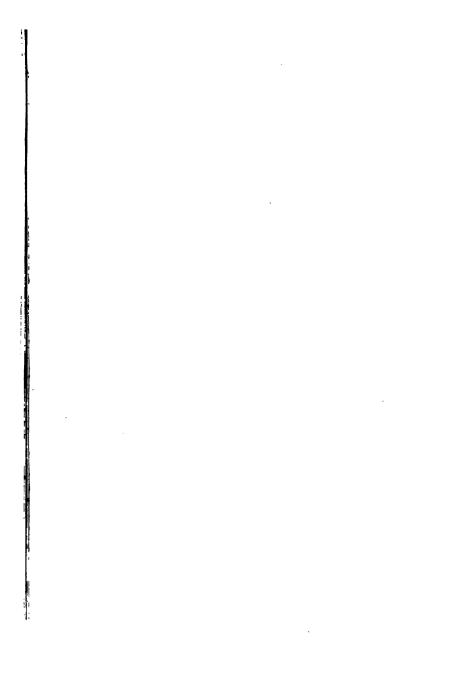
AY after day (he did not know how many) Frank spent in the way described in the last chapter, when at

length he noticed a vessel with three stumpy masts sailing in a southerly course, and not far from the shore. His heart throbbed with joy at the sight. He was greatly excited; and, taking off his old guanaco capa, he waved it franticly around his head, shouting meanwhile at the full pitch of his voice, although his cries could not have reached half-way to the ship. One moment he felt certain he would be observed, and the next he was in despair. He was in a state of unspeakable suspense. But to his intense delight the vessel was hove to, and in two minutes a boat



A SHIP IN SIGHT.

Page 104.



was lowered from her quarter, and was rowed to the shore. He bounded down the beach, rushed into the water, and was lifted into the boat by powerful arms. He covered his face with his hands and burst into convulsive sobs, whilst a rough old tar patted him on the back and said, "Cheer up, my hearty; you are all right now." The steersman, who used a long oar instead of a rudder, brought the boat's head round with one powerful stroke, and in a few minutes Frank was on board of the ship.

A tall, thin man, with black eyes, a hooked nose, and prominent chin covered by a thick tuft of black hair, who wore a lofty felt hat, met him at the top of the ladder, and said in a nasal voice, "Thunder! who are you? a distressed Britisher, I presume? But this ain't a time for asking questions.—I say, doctor, you take a look at this stranger, and then we'll give him a new rig and a feed, and hear his story.—But it would be as well, steward, to throw his cloak overboard."

The doctor, who was a Scotchman, although

it was his custom to call himself a citizen of the world, reported that Frank was an ablebodied young man—he had never, in fact, seen a better proportioned frame, although he was considerably emaciated; and prescribed a warm bath, good clothes, and nutritious aliment. A suit of thick pilot-cloth, including pea-jacket of a drab colour, and a fur cap, was supplied to him; and, after he had had a good wash, one of the sailors cropped his hair, which had grown as wild as a lion's mane, and he felt a degree of comfort to which he had long been a stranger.

When his toilet was completed the captain very kindly invited him into the cabin, where a large dish of lobscouse and hot coffee awaited him; and he did ample justice to the sumptuous repast. Whilst he satisfied his appetite, the captain stood poring over a large chart that was spread upon the other end of the table; and when Frank laid down his knife and fork, the captain said, "Now, entire stranger, I should like to hear how you got upon that desert coast. It was

quite a providence that I took a squint at it through my glass, else you might have remained there until you keeled up; and that's a fact. I saw you waving your cloak, and guessed you must be a white man."

When Frank had given a short account of his adventures, the captain exclaimed: "Well! I want to know! if that ain't one of the strangest yarns I have heard for some time. I do declare, if it were written down, your stayat-home folks would say it was all a fiction. And now, as you have told me where you have come from, I shall tell vou where you are. You are on board of the Leviathan of New Bedford, U.S., of 400 tons, Captain Jonathan Snatchblock commander, bound on a cruise to the South Seas for whales. I have got no room aft, but you will get a snug bunk in the fo'castle. I shall land you at the first Christian port we touch at. You may loaf if you want to; but if you elect to lend a hand, it won't lower you in my estimation, I tell you. Now lay forward; I must go on deck."

Frank returned to the forecastle, and was

shown the bunk he was to occupy. Some of the crew fraternized with him. They were seated on their chests and busy carving quaint designs upon large pieces of ivory, which they told him were the teeth of the sperm whale; or making models of ships, or hearth-rugs, or mending their clothes. It was rather a dingy apartment; but to Frank, after the miseries he had endured, it seemed the height of luxury. The men told him they came "upon the lay"—that is, were to receive a share of the value of the cargo, which for an able seaman is generally about the one hundred and sixtieth part-instead of wages, and that the ship was provisioned for three years.

When Frank went on deck he was struck by some peculiarities about the vessel. A kind of platform, or stage, stood on one side of the deck, and one of the sailors informed him that the heaviest parts of the whale were taken on board there. To the head of the main-mast two powerful pulleys, called "cutting blocks and falls," were attached, which communicated with the windlass. These were

used to hoist the blubber on board. And between the fore and main masts, extending across the deck, stood the "try works" or furnaces, where the blubber was boiled into oil. These works were built of bricks firmly cemented and strengthened by iron, and surrounded by tanks of water. He was also struck by the number of boats suspended ready for use over the vessel's side. crew, which consisted of thirty-five men, all told, also seemed very large for a vessel of her size. He afterwards discovered that some of them had never made a voyage before. One was a deserter from the army, another a deserter from his wife. One had been a railsplitter in Michigan, and another a "runner" in Montreal, who had run from the police; but some of the crew were thorough seamen.

Frank, from the kind treatment and hearty fare he received, was soon in excellent health and spirits. To pay for his entertainment, he made himself as useful as he could; and his exertions were appreciated by the officers. He not only took a pull at the halyards and braces,

but lay aloft with the crew to take in or shake out a reef. The practice he had had when a boy in Sandyport made this sort of work a little more familiar, and he was not afraid to go aloft; he also learned to splice, and to tie any sort of a knot.

On the 6th of November he was startled by hearing loud voices shout from the mast-head, where three men were stationed, "There she blows!—there she spouts!"

- "Where away?" inquired the captain, who was walking the quarter-deck with a spy-glass in his hand.
 - "Three points on the weather-bow, sir."
 - "How far off are they?"
- "About three miles, sir. There she blows!—there again!"
- "Back the main-yard—lower the boats," shouted the captain.
- "There she blows!—there she breaches!" sung the men at the mast-head. "A school of whales!—there again!—there she blows!"

The ship now presented a scene of bustling activity and joyous excitement. In two min-

utes one boat, manned by a crew of six men, was bounding across the waves in the direction of the whales. Another and then another followed. The men at the mast-head continued to watch and report the movements of the "school," and signals were made from the ship for the guidance of the boats. Although the weather was cold Frank would willingly have joined in the chase, but he was afraid to leave the ship without permission.

In about five hours the boats returned with a whale in tow, which was laid alongside and made fast by strong fluke ropes. Part of the bulwarks was removed, and a frame of planks was hung outside for the officers to stand on whilst the blubber was being removed. The "cutting falls" at the mast-head were uncoiled, and the windlass was manned; then began the operation of flensing. The first cut was made at the back of the head; and the blubber, which was about eighteen inches thick at the breast, and from eight to eleven inches on other parts, was peeled off in strips, called blanket-pieces, about four feet wide.

These were drawn up to the pulleys at the mast-head when each piece was cut off from the carcass, and lowered into the main-hatchway, and stowed in a room for the purpose. Triangular keen-edged spades with long handles were used to divide the blubber; and whilst the pieces were being raised the dead whale revolved slowly like a reel from which a thread was being drawn. The carcass, when it was peeled, was separated from the head and tail, and allowed to float away, and was followed by a vast flock of sea-fowl, including albatrosses and petrels, which feasted with deafening clamour on the flesh and fragments of blubber. The head, too heavy to be hoisted on board, was slung to the vessel's side, the fleshy parts being secured, and the valuable substance called spermaceti, which is contained in a large cavity in the top of the skull, was bailed out by a bucket tied to the end of a pole. The lower jaw was also preserved, not only for the sake of the oil and bone, but for the teeth, of which the seamen make many useful and pretty articles. The sperm whale has no teeth

in the upper jaw. The ivory is compact and beautifully marked, but is not so valuable as that of the elephant.

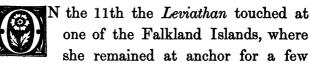
The blubber was cut up and minced, and boiled in large caldrons of copper, the fritters being used as fuel—they make a raging fire. A ship when the blubber is being tried is a grand spectacle on a dark night; although it is one that the crews of passing whalers who have caught no fish are apt to regard with envy—which is sometimes aggravated by the triumphant cheers of the lucky crew.



CAPTAIN SNATCHBLOCK

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FALELAND ISLANDS—THREE TONS OF EGGS—A DANCE WITH PENGUINS— DICK DIRTYFACE AND THE ALBATROSS—DOUBLING THE HORN—FRANK JOINS IN A WHALE HUNT—THE BOAT BITTEN IN TWO BY A REVENGE-FUL COW—FRANK BECOMES A SAILOR—JUAN FERNANDEZ—DICK DIRTY-FACE AND THE PAINT-POT.



days to get a supply of water and fresh provisions. Parties of the men had liberty to go on shore, and Frank went amongst the others. Peat was plentiful, and patches of long grass; there was some stunted scrub, but no trees. Immense numbers of albatrosses and geese were sitting in their nests, which they had built in two long rows, with a passage between. Three tons of eggs were collected and taken on board; and thousands of rabbits and geese, as well as seals, were shot. The whole rigging of the Leviathan was strung with

geese, which, along with the rabbits, made excellent sea-pies and messes of lobscouse. These islands are called "the egg-market" by the sailors. Some of the tars were in such high spirits that they got up a ball, and to the music of a tin whistle waltzed with the penguins for want of better partners; and persisted in the fun, although the birds did not appreciate the compliment, but pecked the sailors' horny hands with their sharp beaks.

The Leviathan weighed anchor on the 15th, and on the following day passed a huge iceberg, which seemed to have been built by some geni, or magician, of crystal and white marble, and launched into the ocean for the destruction of mariners. The summit was crowned with fantastic pinnacles, turrets, and watch-towers of glittering ice; and the base was perforated with gateways and tunnels through which the waves rushed furiously. A strict look-out was kept during the night for these dangerous masses. Great flocks of sea-fowl, such as nellies, sperm-birds, pintados, Cape hens, and albatrosses, were to be seen all around the ship;

and some of them were caught in sport by the boys, with hooks baited with blubber. This was great fun to the lads; but the elder seamen shook their heads, and said that bad luck would follow any one who harmed these birds—and perhaps the seamen were right. It is certain, at all events, that any one, boy or man, who is wantonly cruel to any bird or beast, does not deserve to prosper.

On the 17th a stiff gale blew from the southwest; and the top-sails were double reefed, and everything prepared for a battle round the Horn. Although it was summer the waves were rolling like hills, and heavy showers of sleet and hail were borne upon the blast, striking the face like sparrow-shot. One of the boys, nicknamed Dick Dirtyface, caught an albatross which measured fifteen feet across the wings: it had a long, curbed bill, and the plumage was like snow; it had enormous webfeet which Sam Scuttlebutt made into a tobacco-pouch. It is curious that neither Sam nor that boy throve afterwards.

On the 23rd, the Leviathan was in 57° south

latitude, and had enough westing to bear up and run northerly; and in a few days the weather improved, and the mast-heads were again manned, and on the 18th of December the joyful shout was heard of, "There she blows!—there again!—there she breaches!" Some of the men who were on deck leaped into the first boat; and Frank on the impulse of the moment stepped in too, nor did Mr. Deadeye, the mate, forbid him. In two minutes the boat was in the water, and, propelled by five oars, dashed over the waves to windward.

A whale-boat is an elegant craft, about twenty-seven feet long and four or five broad. The stern is sharp like the bow, which enables her to back rapidly without the necessity of turning. She is steered with a long oar, which is fastened by a grummet, or loop of cord, to the stern. The rowing oars are five in number and fifteen feet in length. The thowls and row-locks are muffled with mats, so that she may steal upon a timid whale with as little noise as possible. At the stern a

wooden post, called the loggerhead, rises above a sort of small poop, and is used to check the line when the harpoon is fixed in the whale. Mats are placed at the bow and stern, to give a firmer footing to the steersman and harpooner. Axes and knives are placed in readiness to cut the line, should this be needed. The lines are neatly coiled in two tubs on the floor of the boat, the usual length of line in both tubs being two hundred and twenty fathoms. The line is about two inches in circumference. Two harpoons attached to the line are placed inside the bow. Each boat is provided with a mast and sail, a bag of biscuits, and kegs of fresh water. The harpoon, which has a point like an arrow, is made of iron, not of steel, is three feet long, and is fixed on a shaft about five feet in length. Two lances are also placed in the bow of the boat.

Frank sat beside the man at the tub oar and helped him to row. In half an hour the first boat (other two were seen hurrying on in her wake) was close to the shoal of whales, which must have numbered two hundred. Some of them were leaping out of the water like trout, and plunging in head first, or falling flat on their stomachs. This the sailors call breaching. Others were rolling over like barrels. Some were swimming quietly along, throwing up a jet of water from their spoutholes every few seconds. Some of the females were suckling their young. The milk is like that of a cow mixed with cream.

There were several large bulls, or "school-masters," as they are called, in the herd, and towards one of these monsters the steersman directed the boat. The harpooner laid down his oar, and seizing a harpoon, darted it with such force that it was buried to the socket in the body of the whale. In an instant he hurled the second harpoon at the astonished animal, which lay still for a few seconds and then plunged convulsively and lashed the water into foam and mist with his tail; but soon recovering from his stupefaction, he swam off along the surface of the water, dragging the boat behind him at a terrific pace, the bow

being raised high above the sea, and the stern threatening to sink beneath the waves. Finding that he could not flee away from the boat, the whale tried to escape from his pursuers by sounding, or diving. The line to which he was fastened by the harpoon ran through a leaded groove in the stern of the boat with great velocity, and the loggerhead around which it had been twined began to smoke with the friction, so that water had to be thrown on it to keep it from going on fire; but when about two hundred fathoms had been run out the bull rose to the surface to breathe, when the boat again approached him, and the harpooner thrust a lance deep into his body. The sea around became crimson with blood, and the wounded animal threw feeble jets of the same colour from the hole on the top of his snout. Again and again the lance was thrust into him, and he seemed to grow weaker and weaker, and to be on the point of expiring, when all at once he appeared to recover, and darted off and joined the shoal, where the other boats were engaged in the

work of destruction; but this was only a dying effort—as the sailors said, he was in his flurry. He suddenly stopped, swam in circles, beating the water with his huge tail, turned on his side with fallen jaw, and was gone.

The crew were congratulating themselves on their easy victory, when at the same instant an old female, enraged at the murder of her protector, or "gallied" by the general disturbance, rushed furiously at the boat, and turning on her back, raised her huge jaw above it and crushed it like a walnut-shell! Her huge mouth was like a room! All the crew, except Scuttlebutt, saved their lives by leaping into the water and holding on to the oars and wreckage until one of the other boats had secured its prey and was able to come to their assistance. Then it was discovered that poor Sam had found a watery grave. Whether he had been killed by the whale or been simply drowned no one could say, but every one was convinced that the albatross's feet had something to do with the accident.

But one bull and three cows having been

captured by the four boats engaged, every one was in high spirits at the result of the encounter. The shoal went off rapidly to windward, where it was impossible to follow it, and the carcasses were towed alongside of the *Leviathan*, that had tacked up to meet them and hove to. Ten tuns of oil were added to the cargo by this day's work.

Captain Snatchblock was so pleased with the spirit shown by Frank in this affair, that he engaged him as an ordinary seaman on the lay, at the rate of a two hundred and twentieth share. Frank had thus to take his trick at the wheel, and learned to steer as well as to perform the other duties of a seaman. When the vessel called at any port, he was always sent in the boat to practise rowing. But he conceived such a love for the profession, that he resolved to study navigation as well as seamanship; and through the kindness of the doctor—who, although he had a habit of railing at his own countrymen and of professing cosmopolitan sentiments, had nevertheless a great partiality for Scotchmen—he obtained a

loan of "Norie's Epitome of Navigation and Nautical Astronomy," and other books and appliances. Although the labours of seamen in whale-ships are often severe and protracted. they have in general more leisure than the crews of other merchant ships, and Frank made rapid progress in his studies. He had now entered his eighteenth year, and regretted the precious time he had wasted at school. The officers felt interested in his zeal for nautical knowledge; and the second mate, Mr. Razee (who had been a captain at one time in a Baltic brig) was induced, by the persuasions of the doctor, to teach Frank the use of the sextant, and how to take solar as well as lunar observations.

To flense the four whales, and to get the blubber and head stuff on board, occupied nearly a week; but the weather fortunately being fine, this laborious work was successfully accomplished. On the 6th of January, which is the height of summer in that hemisphere, the island of Juan Fernandez was seen from the mast-head bearing due north, and

ĺ

about fifty miles off. This island is about twenty-four miles in circumference, and when seen from a distance has a very desolate aspect. Some of the mountains attain a height of three thousand feet above the sea. On the 7th the ship anchored in Cumberland Bay, where there is deep water close to the beach. It was on this island that Alexander Selkirk spent four years and four months of his youthful prime in utter solitude; and it was his strange, eventful history, that suggested the immortal story of "Robinson Crusoe."

Juan Fernandez now belongs to Chili. It was at one time used as a penal settlement, the worst kind of convicts being kept in caves on the sides of the mountains, and guarded by sentries and compelled to labour at public works. It is now rented to a Chilian, who keeps cattle and sells them to passing ships, and adds to his income by catching seals.

The interior of the island is a succession of hills and valleys. The latter are adorned with groves of myrtle and tree shrubs, with grass and ferns, and watered by beautiful streams. There you see the humming-birds fluttering from flower to flower. Large flocks of wild goats may also be seen browsing on the grassy sides and on the top of the cliffs, and running off like deer on the slightest alarm—descendants of the goats that were hunted by Selkirk. Ground-apples, melons, grapes, strawberries of enormous size, and cherries are abundant. Fish are plentiful, and the men of the *Leviathan* caught as many rock-cod and cavalli as the whole crew could consume for several days.

The vessel lay here for a fortnight, to be overhauled and refitted. On the 10th an accident occurred which might have been serious. A bucket or small keg of white paint fell from the mizzen cross-trees, and grazed the head of Captain Snatchblock, who was standing beneath. As he happened to be looking aloft at the time, he received the paint in his face, and his clothes were all plastered with it. "Thunder!" he exclaimed; "what sojer did that?"

As a general rule, he was a good-tempered, jocular man, and during the whole cruise never

used the knuckle-dusters more than twice, though he could handle them with great effect. But now he was in a raging passion, pacing the deck, and growling like a hyena, and sputtering and rubbing his eyes, and vowing vengeance against the "sojer" who had dropped the bucket. The offender was ordered down, and proved to be Dick Dirtyface.

"What!" exclaimed the captain; "it was you, Dirtyface? Well, you are a smart lad; and that's a fact. Lie down on the capstan till I dust your jacket;—but that would be too mild, too gentle a correction. Suppose we make a sojer of you; for your abilities lie more in the military than in the nautical line, and there ain't two ways about it."

"If you please, sir," said Dick, "I would rather take a rope's-ending."

"Well, I guess you would," answered the skipper; "but I reckon we won't give you a choice.—Here, boatswain: you were in the army at one time, I think?"

"Yes, sir; I was a sergeant in the Horse Marines for ten years."

"Well, I want you to give this young man an hour's drill every day until further orders. Make a *sojer* of him, for he ain't fit to be a sailor, nohow you can fix it."

"Ay, ay, sir; I'll put him through his facings. -Here, Dirtyface, you tie that paint-pot on your head for a hat; never mind the paint. Nowtake that capstan-bar for a gun. Attention! Shoulder arms! Straighten your back—you've got a rake forward. Now you've got a rake aft -keep on an even keel. Don't stick your chin in the air—eyes to the front. Now you've got a list to the port side—square the yards keep down your elbows. That's better. I'll make a sojer of you in less than six months. Attention! Mark time without gaining ground -this way-right, left; right, left. Lift your feet-you look as if you were treading birdlime. Right, left; right, left; right, left—halt! Now right foot foremost—march! Come, go ahead - march - 'bout ship: I mean right counter wheel—march! That is pretty good. I see you have a talent for sojering; but as I ain't got time just now to superintend your

instruction, I'll go to my work and keep my weather eye on you, and you march fore and aft until you hear seven bells, and if you halt I'll give you a drilling until eight bells. Go ahead—march!"

Poor Dick burst into tears at this ignominious punishment; and when the captain had gone below to change his clothes, and to wash his face with turpentine, some of the old tars muttered, as they passed the blubbering culprit, "I calculate you won't catch albatrosses or Mother Carey's chickens with a hook any more."



FRANK AT THE WHEEL

CHAPTER XV.

DIRTYFACE DESERTS—FRANK IS SENT WITH OTHERS TO SEARCH FOR HIM— HE SPRAINS HIS ANKLE, BUT FINDS A FRIEND IN NEED—A SCOTCH HERMIT AND HIS CELL.



I was discovered on the morning of the 19th that Dick Dirtyface, who had for nine days been regularly

drilled by the unrelenting boatswain, had deserted the ship during the night; and it was surmised that he had slid down the cable and swum on shore. Six men, including Frank, were immediately sent on shore, in command of the boatswain, to search for him. Inquiries were first made at a man (whom the sailors addressed as John) who farmed the island; but neither he nor the peones who took care of his cattle and cultivated his ground could give any information about the deserter—indeed, they pretended not to understand the questions

put to them, and answered, "No entiendo, señor."

"You intend precious well," said the boatswain; "I know by your faces."

The party then separated, and, whilst some went to search a row of caves not far from the estancia, Frank ascended a steep valley in search of him whom he did not want to find. It is doubtful whether any one but the boatswain would have captured the fugitive, or have given any information that was likely to lead to his discovery, although the sailors pretended to be very zealous in the pursuit, looking eagerly, forsooth, under leaves that would not have concealed a rabbit!

Frank was glad of the opportunity of seeing this lovely island. A crystal stream ran down the valley, its banks adorned with ferns and wild rhubarb of a gigantic size. Sometimes the current, pent between walls, would make an impetuous leap from its narrow channel into a deep pool below, where it would whirl and boil for an instant, and then rush out and bound from this side to that amongst the

rocks, until, reaching a level spot, it would expand and gently fall over a cliff, waving on the breeze like a sheet of gauze. Humming-birds, golden-brown and green, of metallic lustre, were fluttering in every bush. Flocks of pigeons were feeding on bare places on the banks, or flying on whistling wings overhead. To one who had been confined to the deck and forecastle of a whaler this valley seemed like the garden of Eden; and the wild strawberries that grew in abundance were inexpressibly delicious and refreshing after a diet of salt beef and biscuits.

The mountains rose, with sharp peaks, to a height of three thousand feet; and Frank was determined to mount to the summit before he returned to the ship. When he had attained an elevation of one thousand feet he came to a wood of myrtle-trees, which, being clear of brush, was delightful to walk in. The ground was broken by basaltic cliffs, some of considerable height.

Excepting a hawk, which was feeding on a pigeon, he saw no birds here. As he was

}

walking along on the steep ground, and looking up at the green foliage overhead, he chanced to stumble. He fell against a tree, which he clasped in his endeavour to save himself. To his surprise, although he had no time to indulge in that emotion, the tree, which was more than a foot in girth and fully fifty feet in height, was torn up by the roots, and fell with him! As he rolled down the hill he caught hold of another tree, which also gave way; and he then fell over a cliff about twenty feet in height, and reached the ground, as it chanced, with his left foot under him. At first he was more astonished than alarmed at this accident; but, on trying to rise, he found that he had no power in that foot, and could not move from the spot. Again and again he made the attempt, but at length desisted in despair. He now began to reflect on his position, and the longer he considered it, the more desperate it seemed. He was "out of humanity's reach;" he had left the estancia, the only place where he could look for succour, far behind him, and he would never be able to crawl that distance.

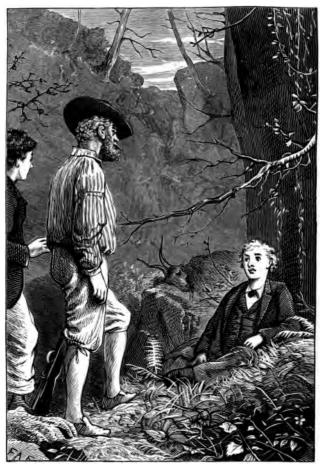
He spent the day in the most melancholy condition, and by night his ankle felt very painful and was much swollen. He, however, dozed a little, and when the sun had risen he awoke with a good appetite. He had just made up his mind to try and crawl to some place where he could gather wild peaches, strawberries, or turnips, when the report of a gun reverberated through the wood, and at the same instant a goat tumbled over the cliff and fell within a few feet of where he lay. Blood was oozing through the hair at the region of the heart, and, after a few convulsive kicks, the poor animal lay still.

In half a minute a man with a gun in his hand, accompanied by a youth, came round a corner of the cliff, and, standing beside the goat, stared at Frank with as much surprise as he did at them. The man was about forty-five years of age, about five feet ten inches in height, with a capacious chest and powerfully-built frame. He wore a felt hat with the brim turned up behind, a striped cotton shirt, linen drawers tied at the knee, white stockings, and

canvas slippers. He had reddish-yellow curly hair, and a thick, short, red beard. His eyes were blue, and his nose short and retroussé. His mouth was long and his chin broad, which gave a determined expression to his countenance. After a halt of a few seconds, he said, "I do hope I have not shot you as well as the goat; but I never suspected that any one would be here."

Frank explained how his accident had occurred; when the man replied, "I am glad to find that I have not hurt you, more especially as I hear you are a Scotchman, like myself. Let me lift you up; and put your arm around my neck, and you will be able to walk to my house.—Here you, sailor, walk on the other side of him, and lend a hand; or, never mind, you can bring home the goat."

The sailor thus addressed had appeared, on first seeing Frank, inclined to run off; but now he came forward, and said, "You won't inform upon me, Frank, will you? I would never have run away if they had not made a sojer of me; but no sailor could be expected to stand that."



A FRIEND IN NEED. , Page 194.

Frank promised not to tell, and, with his arm over the Scotchman's shoulder, he limped out of the wood, whilst Dirtyface followed with the goat, and reached an open, level piece of ground, surrounded by trees, on which stood a small log hut. Frank could have crawled to it in five minutes, had he known it was there, and felt provoked that he had lain all night in the wood when shelter was so near.

John Davidson (for that was the name of the owner of the hut) made Frank lie down in his bunk, and then examined his foot and rubbed it well with rum; which relieved the pain a little. He then prepared breakfast, which consisted of excellent dried fish, tea, and biscuits.

John then asked Frank what part of Scotland he was born in, and expressed a little surprise when he answered "Sandyport."

"Well," he replied, "that is curious. Are you a son of Lieutenant Powderhorn? I myself was born in Perth; but I was a waiter for six years in the Green Lion of Sandyport, and I have seen your father a hundred times.

Running up and down stairs hurt the soles of my feet, so I gave up being a waiter, and learned to be a tinsmith in Glasgow. married, but I very soon found that I had drawn anything but a prize in the matrimonial lottery; so I set off to the United States. In summer I worked as a stoker or seaman on the Lakes, and in winter chopped wood at two dollars a cord for the Chicago market. I then went to New York, and shipped as cook on board of the Bonito, and made a trip to San Francisco. But the captain and I did not pull well together; so I took a boat one night when the ship lay in Cumberland Bay, and came on shore with my chest and hammock. I hid in the woods till the Bonito left, and then presented myself to the Chilian, from whom I got work as a gardener. After six months with him, I got leave to make a small settlement of my own up here. I got an axe and other tools, built this hut, and enclosed a piece of ground for a garden. I sell my vegetables to the Chilian, who sells them to ships, and so keep myself supplied with groceries and any

article I require; and for three years now I have been as happy as the day is long. But I must go out and skin the goat, and make that sailor work a little in the garden. Would you like to see the newspapers? I have a copy of the Daily News, only seven months old."

Frank lay in the bunk and examined the hut, which was very neatly built of logs, laid one on the top of the other, and jointed at the It had a window about a foot square, which was unglazed, but could be closed with a board when the wind blew into it. A shelf or two were fixed to the wall, on which were deposited a copy of Burns, and some of Marryat's novels in yellow covers, and various miscellaneous articles. The cabin was furnished with a chair, a stool, and a table, all constructed by John out of the rough timber. It could also boast of a small stove, which had belonged to a ship at some time, although the cooking was generally done outside. Frank felt perfectly happy in his new quarters, his only regret being that he had no opportunity of letting Captain Snatchblock know the real reason of his not returning to the ship. He was certain the captain would fancy he had followed Dirty-face's example and had deserted: it was painful to him to be thought ungrateful.

John was very unlike some of the shepherds Frank had known in Buenos Ayres, who fall into slovenly habits and grudge to cook, and who even say that it is only dirty people who live in smoky towns that require to wash their faces. All his clothes and everything about his house were purely clean. He was seldom idle—which was perhaps the cause of his happiness. He had fenced about an acre of ground, and had it in high cultivation. His onions were as large as those of Portugal; his cabbages would have gained a prize at a show in England; and his pease, turnips, parsnips, and melons were equally excellent. Industrious himself, he hated to see others inactive, and from sunrise to sunset (for he had no clock except the sun) he laboured himself and kept Dirtyface busily at work. The latter, indeed, began, after a week or two, to groan under his bondage, and, whenever he had an opportunity, would ascend the hill to look out for a vessel.

The Leviathan sailed from the island on the 20th—the day after Frank had left her. On the 15th of February another ship anchored in the bay, and Lazaro, one of the peones, came up with the news and to get a supply of vegetables from John, which he carried down on sacks slung on a mule's back. This peon knew no English, and was delighted when Frank spoke to him in Spanish. John had learned only a few nouns in that language, and had to converse chiefly by signs.

Dirtyface, on learning that a ship had arrived in the bay, threw down his hoe and bounded to the shore in the hope of getting a berth on board of the vessel; which no doubt he did, as he never came back. He had scarcely time to bid adieu to Frank, and forgot to thank John, who had given him shelter in his distress; although, indeed, he had made him work well for it. Dirtyface, it seems, had, as was suspected, slid down the cable, swum on shore, and found his way to the estancia without

difficulty. He was hospitably entertained for the night and taken by one of the peones to John's house next morning.

Frank was so much better that he was able to limp about the premises and to undertake the cooking and to milk the tame goats, of which John possessed five. Sometimes a small quantity of Indian meal was got in exchange for vegetables, which made excellent porridge, and formed, along with the milk, a delicious and nutritious meal. Sometimes they made broth of the flesh of a wild goat, when they had a chance of shooting one, but oftener with a piece of beef obtained from the estancia. In March an abundance of wild peaches could be gathered in the woods, and of these John preserved large quantities.

When Frank's ankle was better (although for many months a false step reminded him of the sprain) he went with John to the shore, and, borrowing the Chilian's boat, spent the day in fishing. The catch was so large that they were obliged to salt and store the fish at the estancia and carry up parcels at their leisure.

On the 21st of March the rain fell in torrents and the weather continued wet for some weeks. But this did not put a stop to John's industry. In a shed which he had erected he worked busily, chopping posts and rails for a new enclosure; and, amongst other pieces of carpentry, he made a barrow, the wheel being of one piece of wood.

On Frank expressing surprise that John should labour incessantly for more than supplied his wants, the latter opened his chest, and, taking out a leathern bag, said, "Look here, my boy," and placed a great quantity of money-silver and copper-upon the table; "that is money I have got for vegetables, and I intend to send that and more home to my wife, when I can meet with a captain to carry it that I think is honest and can hold his tongue. I want her to get it without knowing from whom it comes; for although she was unkind to me, that is no reason I should be so to her—at least more unkind than I can help. This will not be the first money I have sent her. I am very sorry I can do no more for her." John replaced the treasure in his chest, and seemed to be sunk in meditation for the rest of the day. It may seem strange that any earthly motive could induce a man to live apart from all his fellow-creatures; but characters such as John are by no means uncommon in the South Seas. A great many islands are inhabited by hermits—seafaring deserters, who live in solitude, and make a livelihood by selling vegetables to any ship that happens to call.



JOHN DAVIDSON, JUAN FERNANDEZ

CHAPTER XVL

THE STORY OF SELKIRK-THE HERMIT'S DREAMS.

HAT a curious pipe that is!" said Frank one evening as he and John were sitting before the hut.

"Yes," said the latter; "I believe that pipe belonged to Alexander Selkirk; for you see his initials are cut on the bowl, and I found it upon the peak where, as I have been told, he used to sit and watch for ships. If he had been married to a virago he would not have been so anxious to leave.—Did you ever read about Alexander Selkirk?"

"Yes," answered Frank; "but I had forgotten that it was on this island he lived."

"It was here," said John, "that he lived for four years and four months all alone. I read his story when I was on board of the *Bonito*;

and it was that story made me think of coming here to live. It was in a book of voyages that belonged to the sail-maker."

"I wish," said Frank, "you had brought the book with you, as I would have read it with greater interest here, on the very spot where Selkirk lived, than I did at home. Tell me as much of it as you remember, John."

"Well," said the latter, looking steadily at the old pipe, and concluding every sentence, as was his habit, with a nod of his head, "I think Selkirk was born in the town of Largo, in the year 1676. I remember he was a seventh son; and I suppose you have heard that the lives of seventh sons are more extraordinary than those of other people. In 1695 he went to sea, and cruised about from one part of the world to another for six years, and learned to be a good sailor. In 1702, he entered as sailing-master on board of the Cinque Ports, a privateer, commanded by Captain Pickering, which, along with the St. George, commanded by Captain Dampier, was fitted out to make

war on the Spaniards in South America. Fever broke out in the ship, and Captain Pickering died, and the command devolved upon Captain Stradling, who had such a violent temper, that rather than serve under him Selkirk resolved to live in some solitary island. In August 1704, he was left here with all his effects, consisting of a chest of clothes, a gun and some ammunition, a hatchet, knife, Bible, kettle, and mathematical instruments, and books. It is said that he repented of his resolution, and would have returned to the ship had he been permitted, but that Stradling laughed at him.

"Being a young fellow, he at first felt very melancholy, and would sit upon a rock staring at the sea and looking out for ships until hunger forced him to search for something to eat. The slightest noise during the night made him start. If he had been as old as I am no noise would have frightened him, except the naggling of a woman's tongue. When winter came on, he built two huts,—I wish I knew whereabouts they were situated,—one for a kitchen, and the

other for a bed-room. He caught young kids and tamed them, so that he might have a supply of food in case he was sick. But he soon learned to run so quickly that he could catch the old ones. His clothes wore out; but he made a cap, coat, and breeches of goatskin.

"But stop a little, till I fill his pipe again. I put a high value on it, for his sake.—In January 1709 the Duke and Duchess, privateers, were seen off the island; and at night Selkirk, alarmed lest they might go away and leave him behind, kindled a fire to attract attention. Next morning Captain Woodes Rodgers of the Duke sent a boat on shore, and Selkirk rushed down the beach to meet her; but excess of joy tied his tongue, and he could scarcely, for want of practice in speaking, find words to express his meaning, and sometimes used half a word. Captain Rodgers engaged him as mate of his ship, and he served under him during the whole course of the expedition. Selkirk died on board of H.M.S. Weymouth, in 1723. That is all I remember," said John,

"of his story. I think, after his cruise in the Duke he went back to Largo, but did not feel happy at home, and was always wishing he were here again; as I am certain I should do were I to go home. In fact, between ourselves, my only fear is that my wife may find out where I am and join me some day.

"One night I had a fearful dream. thought I had gone on board of a ship that lay at anchor in the bay, and the first person I saw on deck was my wife, who rushed at me so quickly that her hand grasped my collar before I had time to jump into the boat. I, however, managed to escape, and rowed rapidly to the shore. But a boat bounded after me from the ship, with my wife seated in the stern-sheets; the crew shouted to me to stop, and fired a volley of musketry at me, but without effect. I sprang on the beach and ran up to the caves that you may have noticed, and which were used by the Chilian government to keep criminals in. But I had scarcely gained the entrance, when my wife and the sailors were close at my heels. I ran into one of the caves, and found that it fortunately branched into innumerable passages. Into one of these I flew, and reckless whether or not I should find my way out again, I continued to run in the darkness for fully half an hour, when I came to a great cavern or natural hall, which was filled with a dull golden light that did not seem to come from any place in particular. Here I halted and listened, but could not hear the voices or footsteps of my pursuers. I flattered myself that I had escaped, and began to feel more tranquil. There was perfect silence in the cave, which I examined with some curiosity. The roof was something like a dome, but rough and full of crevices. Whilst I looked I thought that strange bats fluttered silently out of the holes and came wheeling around my head. Their bodies were as big as cats, and their faces bore some resemblance to those of human beings. They had great goggle eyes, with which they stared at me, and they twisted their mouths like old women sucking cayenne lozenges. They had long leather wings that made no noise,

although they fanned the air as they fluttered past.

"The floor of the cavern was covered with fine sand and cockle-shells. Whilst I was looking at it I thought that a creature like a dark green ball ran past me, and I had presence of mind to give it a kick and knock it on its back, where it lay with two web feet, exactly like a duck's, struggling in the air. I lifted it up by one of its feet, and found that the body was like a ball of green jelly, weighed about two pounds, and had neither head nor wings. I flung it on the floor again, when the beast ran off, and escaped through a crack in the wall.

"On a shelf of the rock I also noticed a number of strange birds sitting in a row—at least they had feet and beaks like birds, although their bodies were mere featherless skins, like dried bladders, that crackled as they breathed; bones, flesh, or blood they had none. Their eyes were dry and lifeless; and yet the creatures breathed. Their heads rested on their shoulders, or hung feebly on their breasts. Their

beaks were open, and I could see that they were dry horn inside, without palates or tongues.

"Whilst I stood looking at the birds, a strange noise attracted my attention, and on looking round I observed a doorway in the wall which I had not noticed before; above it was a large horse-shoe. I was glad to leave the hall, for the bats were flying about in thousands, and were becoming bolder and more annoying, and I entered the stable, which seemed of an enormous length. I thought I saw on the right hand and on the left an endless row of horses, and such hideous-looking brutes I had never seen before; they were all of a black colour, with heavy, clumsy feet shod with lead. These monsters were all brokenwinded, and seemed to be choking and at the last gasp. I knew at once that they were night-mares, and I shuddered at the thought. I would have gone back, but found that the door had closed behind me and I could not open it. I saw that there was no alternative but to pass through the stable, with hoofs on

the right of me and hoofs on the left. I had scarcely passed the first pair when they flung out and missed me by an inch. Then the whole troop began to snort and kick in the most furious manner, and every instant I expected that the breath would be knocked out of my body; but as it was as dangerous to stand as to run, I bounded up the stable, and curiously enough escaped unhurt.

"I dreamt that I passed through an archway of green metal into a beautiful garden and orchard. The trees were loaded both with blossom and fruit. Here everything grew so quickly that in the course of a minute you could see the bud burst into a rose and the blossom into a peach or apple, and the leaves wither, fall off, and grow again; a continual and visible change was going on everywhere. I thought I plucked some of the grapes and peaches, and sat down in a grotto to eat them, for I felt tired and thirsty; but I found that the fruit had no flavour and did not quench my thirst. Luckily, at the end of the grotto a stream of silver water poured out of the rock

and fell into a hole in the ground, where it disappeared. I opened my mouth to let the water drop into it; but fancy my surprise when I discovered that the stream was not one of water, but of threepenny pieces! I forgot my thirst in a moment, and began to fill my pockets with handfuls of the coin. I filled all my pockets, and was grieved that I had not brought a sack with me that I might have carried off a proper quantity, or two sacks and a wheel-barrow.

"Whilst I stood pondering on what I ought to do so as to profit by an opportunity of becoming rich which very likely would never occur again, I was alarmed by the sound of voices, and in a moment afterwards my wife and six sailors rushed into the grotto. The former seized me by the collar, and exclaimed,—"So I have found you at last, you old villain!" And the sailors began to pommel me on all sides. Enraged at this treatment, I tried to free myself and return the blows of the men. But to my intense disgust I could not lift a hand; my arms felt quite powerless,

so that I was obliged to stand perfectly helpless and allow myself to be basted. At length one bottle-nosed sailor gave me such a box on the stomach that I awoke gasping with the pain, and made a vow that I would never eat salt pork for supper any more. I had eaten heartily of a piece that I had got from a skipper in exchange for some cauliflowers, and I believe it was the cause of that horrible dream. —But, I say, it is about time to turn in now."

Next day, whilst John and Frank were working in the garden, the former remarked,—"It is curious that I never dreamt any until I had been some time on this island. I often think that dreams are meant to keep our faculties alive and active when we are in situations where there is nothing real to exercise them on. One half of my brain is obliged to lie idle here, and very likely it would go to decay were the blood not sent through it by dreams. Nothing happens in this world without a purpose.

"Last night I dreamt I was wandering

about in a strange town, searching for I know not what. Some of the streets were so narrow that I had to squeeze myself through between the houses, and fancied at times that I would stick altogether. I thought I came to an old clothes shop, at the door of which a Jew was standing who had a nose like a parrot. I asked him, 'What town is this, please?' And he answered, with a wink of his cunning eye, 'Timbuctoo.' 'Tell that to the marines,' I replied; 'Timbuctoo was never like this,'-for although asleep, I was wide awake. A little further on I saw a negro in the middle of the street, which had grown wider. He was dressed in a white hat, velveteen jacket, red waistcoat, corduroy shorts, white stockings, and clogs. He sang a song of which I did not understand a word, but which threw the bystanders into convulsions. His mouth was of an enormous size, and his voice so deep and loud that it made all the windows shake. Glad to escape from the deafening noise, I walked up the street, and close to the kerb-stone noticed an old sailor, whose appearance was so

strange that I was fain to stop and look at him. He had a small cocked hat on his head, and his hair was done up in a pig-tail. He wore a scarlet jacket, wide canvas trousers, and a pair of slippers with silver buckles on the fore foot; a cutlass with a brass hilt hung at his side. Behind him, on a small cart with four wheels, he dragged the model of a ship. She was an old-fashioned craft, bluff-bowed, and high at the stem and stern. I saw that she carried sixteen guns, and on her head-board I could read Cinque Ports. Whilst I stood examining the vessel, the sailor turned to me with a smile, and holding out a horny hand, exclaimed, 'Hallo, Davidson! what cheer?' 'I don't have the pleasure of knowing you,' I answered. 'What!' he rejoined, 'don't vou know me? I am Alexander Selkirk. But I am tired of this business: let us go back to Juan Fernandez.' So away we went, leaving the ship behind us. But we had not gone far before the wide street was closed at the end by a splendid church. It seemed to be built of ivory, and was covered with images

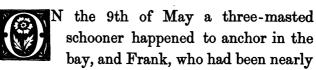
and strange carvings. It had three great towers, all sculptured to the top; the highest, which was in the centre, must have been fully eight hundred feet in height. Whilst Selkirk and I stood gazing at this magnificent building with the deepest admiration, a procession of priests issued from the door, bearing banners and idols, and singing anthems. A large number of musicians followed in the rear playing most beautifully on fiddles and banjoes. All the people assembled in the street dropped upon their knees, leaving my esteemed friend and myself alone standing. I dreamt that the bells in the towers began to toll, at first softly and slowly, but the strokes gradually increased in strength and rapidity until the clanging became really terrible. Both Selkirk and myself were obliged to hold our ears to keep out the fearful din. At the same time I thought that the lofty houses on both sides began to topple and to fall upon the crowd. The steeples also rocked to and fro, and finally tumbled to the ground amidst clouds of dust. I felt dreadfully alarmed, for the earth shook

and pitched and rolled like a ship's deck in a cross sea; great rents ran with rattling reports across the surface, and sulphurous flames leapt crackling through the cracks. To escape the rents I was obliged to skip from this side to that, like a man dancing Gillie Callum.—Ha, ha, ha! dreams are curious; but I must go and make ready the dinner."



CHAPTER XVII.

FRANE LEAVES JUAN FERNANDEZ IN THE "GUANO BIRD"—DREADFUL TEMPEST
AT THE HORN, BUT A PLEASANT PASSAGE AFTERWARDS—THE SAILOR'S
RETURN.



four months on the island, and whose ankle was now quite well, resolved to take advantage of the opportunity, and to get into the busy world again. On descending to the shore he learned from some sailors who were bringing water-barrels up the rough beach that the schooner was the *Guano Bird* of Liverpool, bound from Callao to Leith, and commanded by Captain Smellie. Frank went on board with the ship's boat, and saw the skipper, who readily engaged him as an ordinary seaman, and agreed to supply him with clothes fit

for a passage round the Horn at that season.

Frank asked the captain's leave to go on shore for a day as he wished to bid good-bye to a friend. This had scarcely been granted when John Davidson came off to the schooner in the Chilian's boat. He sold six fowls and two or three kegs of preserved peaches to the captain, and then came up to Frank and took him before the windlass, where they could talk without being heard. He asked Frank to carry his savings home and to get them safely delivered to his wife in Glasgow; but Frank suggested that it would be safer to give the money to the skipper, and get a receipt from him and a written promise that he would deliver the money to Frank on the arrival of the schooner in Leith. This plan the hermit approved of, and Captain Smellie agreed at once to do all that was asked. The cash was thus in safer keeping than it might have been in a forecastle, where to lock a trunk is considered a breach of etiquette and an insult to all the crew. Frank shook hands with and returned his hearty thanks to poor John Davidson as he stepped into the Chilian's boat to be rowed on shore. The captain kindly gave the hermit two pounds of tobacco as he was leaving.

On the 13th the Guano Bird, having completed her water and repairs, weighed anchor and shaped her course for the Horn. For a fortnight the weather continued very good for the season, with a north-west breeze, which drove the schooner along at a rapid pace. On the 27th the wind shifted to the south-west, and increased to half a gale, accompanied by a continuous fall of snow and sleet. The air was bitterly cold, and all the rigging became thickly coated with ice. The sails were frozen as hard as boards, and had to be beaten soft by the men's hands before they could be reefed or stowed. The fingers of the crew, although covered with warm mittens, were so benumbed that it was with the utmost difficulty they could go aloft or lie out on the yard. One man fell from the main cross-trees, but fortunately was caught in the belly of the sail, which

broke his fall. The air was so filled with snow that it was impossible to see half a cable's length beyond the ship. The sea was so high, yet so short, that the plunging schooner dipped her bowsprit into every wave.

On the 20th of June, after a dreadful wrestle with the elements, during which the crew suffered fearfully from cold, want of sleep, and insufficient food (for it was impossible to light the caboose or to cook any), the vessel's head was turned to the north-east, from which the men presumed that she had doubled the Horn; for men before the mast cannot gratify their curiosity by inquiring at the officers where they are. Large numbers of whales and grampuses were shortly afterwards seen, and spouted so close to the vessel that the men were sickened by the smell of their filthy Flocks of penguins and albatrosses, as well as pintadoes, flew around the ship. The air still felt bitterly cold, and the weather continued tempestuous. But on the 6th of July it became sensibly milder, and the heat increased every day, and so rapidly that on (650) 15

the 12th all the men laid aside their mittens. jackets, and even shoes and stockings. On the 20th the Guano Bird crossed the line and lay for several days becalmed, whilst all hands were busied calking the decks, repairing the rigging, and painting the sides, the men going about barefooted, and the captain standing on the quarter-deck, dressed in duck clothes and Panama hat that had been browned by the sun. The sea was of the deepest blue and without a ripple. All sail was set to catch the slightest breeze, and men, as they sat patching sails, could be heard softly whistling for a wind. On the 24th a breeze sprang up, and the weather during the rest of the passage was truly delightful.

The forecastle, a wretched hole during the stormy weather, seemed now quite cheerful, and the lively strains of a fiddle or a jolly song could be heard there during the second dog-watch. Some spun long yarns, and all forgot the miseries which they had so recently endured. On the 30th of August the Guano Bird arrived at Leith docks, when Frank

received his wages, which, deducting clothes, amounted to thirty shillings, and went to Edinburgh. His first step was to go to the National Bank and transmit the money which he had received from Captain Smellie to Mrs. Davidson. That same evening he took the train to Sandyport. How his heart throbbed with contending emotions as he sat and reflected on home and how soon he would be there again! It seemed not three years but thirty since he left it. He was now in his eighteenth year, and as handsome a fellow as ever walked on a plank.

He soon reached home, and without any hesitation opened the door and stepped into the room where his mother sat sewing and his father reading. The latter looked up as Frank, with his face bronzed on the equator and in his sailor rig, entered the room, and sternly exclaimed, "Well, sir, who are you? what do you want?" His mother also stared, but with an expression of mild surprise, her eyes growing gradually larger, and the opening of her mouth rounder.

"Why, don't you know your own son, father? I am Frank," he said in a barytone voice.

The lieutenant flung his book against the wall, and seized his son by both his hands, but could not articulate a word. His mother rose, too, and flung her arms around his neck, but could only utter, "O Frank!"

"This is an extraordinary day," exclaimed the lieutenant. "I don't know what to think or do. I must hoist the ensign to begin with;" and he hurried out to the flag-staff.

Mrs. Powderhorn, when she regained a little composure, upbraided Frank with having allowed years to pass without so much as sending them a line to let them know whether he was alive or dead, and told him how many anxious days and sleepless nights she had spent on his account—"But what dreadfully horny palms you have—poor fellow!" He explained that he had been a captive in Patagonia for a year, during which period it had been out of his power to write or to get a letter sent; and that, after being rescued, he had

been living in Juan Fernandez. He informed his father that he had studied navigation, and intended to pass an examination and get a certificate as a mate. He said that the life of a sailor was a hard one, but he was resolved to persevere in it, as he did not believe any other profession would suit him, and with all its hardships he liked it. Knowing his father's prejudices, he contended that a captain in the mercantile marine required as much intelligence, presence of mind, and other estimable qualities, as a captain in the navy—"But, by-the-by, father, I have three pounds of honey-dew tobacco, that I bought in the ship."

"Ah! where is it, my boy? There is nothing that I would value more."

"But I thought you were to give up smoking?" said Frank with a twinkle in his eye.

"And so I intend to do," answered his father. "I am quite determined on that point, for I am convinced that smoking is injurious to digestion and destructive to the constitution. But where is the tobacco, my

boy? I should like a pipe of the genuine article."

Some of the neighbours, who had observed the ensign fluttering at the gaff of the flagstaff, and had conjectured that something uncommon had occurred at the cottage, began to drop in and give Frank a hearty welcome. Amongst the rest came old Swingtrees, who, when Frank inquired about his son, replied,—

"Oh! Tom is getting on uncommonly well; he has got a water-privilege in Michigan, and is erecting a saw-mill."

"Michigan!" echoed Frank; "why, I thought he went to the Falkland Islands."

"And so he did, and he resided there for six months; but he disliked the climate as well as the system of farming, so he went to Michigan, where he has got a water-privilege, and is putting up a saw-mill. He says lumber—that is what they call boards there—has risen to a fabulous price, and that he is certain, when he gets his mill set agoing, to make a fortune. All he wants is the loan of £20, to build a dam. He writes in high

spirits, and seems to be getting on remarkably well. He says no young man of any energy should remain in the old country. He is a clever, pushing fellow—;" but here Swingtrees was interrupted in his panegyric by Mr. Dall, who entered the room and gave Frank a horizontal shake of the hand, and said,—

"I am delighted to see you, Frank—quite delighted. And how have you been getting on in Buenos Ayres—how have you been getting on? It is an excellent field, I have been told, for energetic young men—a very excellent field. You have made lots of money, I hope, lots of money; although, after all, what is money? we can take none of it with us. I suppose you are, at all events, rich in land, and in cattle, and in sheep."

Here Frank was obliged to explain, as briefly as he could, how he had been captured by the Indians and kept a prisoner in Patagonia, when Mr. Dall continued:—

"I am sorry to hear you left Buenos Ayres, Frank—very sorry; because I have been told it is an excellent field for young men. I fear you are rather vacillating.—And how did you get on in Patagonia?"

"Well, grandfather, it would be difficult for any white man to get on there," answered Frank.

"I am not so sure of that, Frank—not so sure. Some men will get on anywhere—perseverance overcomes all difficulties. I think you were foolish to leave Patagonia—very foolish: a rolling stone gathers no moss.—And what did you do when you left Patagonia, Frank?"

"Well, I was a common sailor part of the time," Frank replied, "and then I was detained in Juan Fernandez."

"What! a common sailor?" exclaimed Mr. Dall; "I am sorry to hear it—very sorry; three years from home, and to come back a common sailor! oh dear, dear!—What does your poor mother say?"

Frank's eyes were flashing with anger, when the door opened and a young lady stepped in, who was so pretty, and who looked at him so kindly, that his wrath was extinguished in a moment. Her face was rosy as the morn. After hesitating an instant, she advanced to him and said, "Why, Frank, don't you know me? I am Bella Daithy."

The evening was spent in the most delightful manner. The ladies retired to the little drawing-room, where, at their earnest request, Frank gave a full, true, and particular account of all his adventures. Much interest was manifested in Grennow, and many inquiries were made as to her looks and dress, and how she arranged her hair. A little music gave an agreeable variety to the entertainment.

The gentlemen were equally happy in the parlour; and if any one had listened to their conversation, he would have heard something like this:—

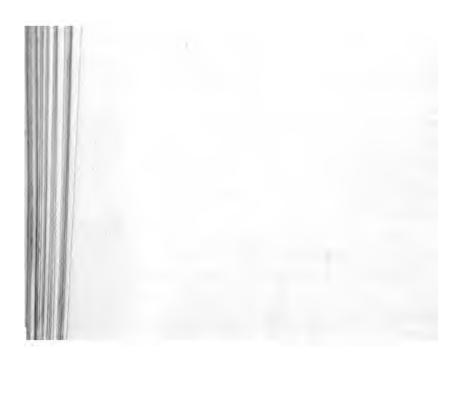
"I was a midshipman at the time on board of *The Snapping Turtle*, and we came to an anchor on the east side of the island to careen and take in water. Like all the rest, I was suffering from the scurvy—but we have nothing to fear from the importation of American beef, which can only come into competition

with the inferior qualities of British beef, such as the beef of cows, bulls, and ill-bred steers and heifers—so I was sent on shore for air and exercise, and ate nothing for some time but broth made from the tops of the cabbagetree-with an augmentation of stipend amounting to two chalders—to two chalders—our aim consequently should be to produce nothing but first-class beef—and I felt a good deal better, but I was advised to bury myself up to the neck in the sand, and this brought on a profuse perspiration, and I recovered immediately. In the course of a week I was a different man —better bred, superior in quality, finer in the bone, shorter in the legs, broader along the back, better sprung in the rib, and much neater about the head and neck-with an augmentation, as I mentioned, of two chalders. The glebe was about six acres—about six acres—so that I can say I witnessed my own funeral, and have seen a good deal of life since I was buried."

The party did not separate until a late hour. As the lieutenant and his son felt a deep interest in the same subjects, they were very fond of each other's society. The former had now an attentive and intelligent listener to all his yarns about the sea, and sympathizing in the aspirations of the young man the old one forgot his own age. He undertook to give Frank a thorough knowledge of navigation before the latter went to sea again. This he did, and with the result that in three months Frank passed a most creditable examination, and received a certificate as a first officer.



LIEUTENANT POWDERHORN TAKING AN OBSERVATION.



BOOKS FOR BOYS. TALES OF ADVENTURE AND ENTERPRISE.

BY R. M. BALLANTYNE.

- HUDSON BAY; or, Everyday Life in the Wilds of North America, With Forty-six Engravings. Crown 8vo, cloth extra. Price 5s.
- THE YOUNG FUR-TRADERS. A Tale of the Far North. With Illustrations. Post 8vo, cloth. Price 3s. 6d.
- UNGAVA. A Tale of Esquimaux Land. With Illustrations. Post 8vo, cloth. Price 3s. 6d.
- THE CORAL ISLAND. A Tale of the Pacific. With Illustrations. Post 8vo, cloth. Price 8s. 6d.
- MARTIN RATTLER; or, A Boy's Adventures in the Forests of Brazil. With Illustrations. Post 8vo. cloth. Price 3s. 6d.
- THE DOG CRUSOE AND HIS MASTER. A Tale of the Western Prairies. With Illustrations. Post 8vo, cloth. Price 3s. 6d.
- THE GORILLA HUNTERS. A Tale of Western Africa. With Illustrations. Post 8vo, cloth. Price 3s. 6d.
- THE WORLD OF ICE; or, Adventures in the Polar Regions. With Engravings. Post 8vo, cloth. Price 3s. 6d.
- THE OCEAN AND ITS WONDERS. With Sixty Engravings. Post 8vo, cloth extra. Price 3s.

TALES FOR THE HOME CIRCLE.

- LOOK AT THE BRIGHT SIDE. A Tale for the Young. By JOANNA H. MATTHEWS, Author of "Little Sunbeams." Post Svo, cloth extra. Price 28. dd.
- ISABEL'S SECRET. By the Author of "The Story of a Happy Little Girl." Foolscap 8vo, cloth. Price 2s. 6d.
- THE STORY OF A HAPPY LITTLE GIRL. By the Author of "Isabel's Secret." Royal 18mo. Price 1s. 6d.
- THE BASKET OF FLOWERS. A Tale for the Young. With Coloured Frontispiece and numerous Engravings. Royal 18mo. Price 1s. 6d.
- "OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN." A Story Illustrative of the Lord's Prayer. By a Clergyman's Widow. With Coloured Frontispiece and Sixteen Engravings. Royal 18mo. Price 1s.
- FAVOURITE NARRATIVES FOR THE CHRISTIAN HOUSE-HOLD. Containing:—THE SHEPHERD OF SALISBURY PLAIN—THE DAIRY-MAN'S DAUGHTER—THE YOUNG COTTAGER, &c. Post 8vo, cloth. Price 2001.

T. NELSON AND SONS, LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK.

BOOKS FOR BOYS

- ALMOST A HERO; Or, School Days at Ashcombe. By Robert Richardson, Author of "The Young Cragsman," "The Boys of Willoughby," &c. With Seven Engravings. Post 8vo, cloth extra. Price 3s. 6d.
- THE BOY'S COUNTRY BOOK. By WILLIAM HOWITT. Post 8vo, cloth. With Illustrations. Price 3s. 6d.
 - From "Edinburgh Review," July 1879.—"To our mind William Howitt's 'Boy's Country Book' is the best of the kind that has ever been written, and the publishers would do a kindness to the boys of the day if they were to bring it out in a new edition. It describes the life of a country lad some sixty years ago, and the descriptions are for the most part as true to nature now as then. Like all his later works, it has the force of most faithful delineation; and there is a fresh exuberance of hearty appreciation of those innocent pleasures in which his days flew by."
- CULM ROCK. Foolscap 8vo, cloth extra. Price 2s. 6d.
- THE CASTAWAYS. A Story of Adventure in the Wilds of Borneo. By Captain MAYNE REID. With Twenty-six Engravings. Post 8vo, cloth extra. Price 3a, 6d.
- THE ADVENTURES OF MARK WILLIS. By Mrs. George Cupples, Author of "The Little Captain," &c. With Forty-five Engravings. Royal 18mo, cloth. Price is, 6d.
- THE YOUNG CRUSOE. By Mrs. HOFLAND. With Fourteen Engravings. Royal 18mo, cloth. Price 1s. 6d.
- WHAT SHALL I BE? or, A Boy's Aim in Life. Illustrated. Foolscap 8vo, cloth. Price 2s.
- HOME PRINCIPLES IN BOYHOOD, and Other Stories for the Young. Post 8vo, cloth. Price 2s.
- FRANK MARTIN; or, The Story of a Country Boy. With Coloured Frontispiece. Foolscap 8vo, cloth. Price 1s. 6d.
- NED'S MOTTO; or, Little by Little. With Coloured Frontispiece, and numerous Engravings. Royal 18mo, cloth. Price 1s. 6d.
- TOM TRACY; or, Whose is the Victory? Illustrated. Foolscap 8vo. cloth. Price 1s. 6d.
- NUTS FOR BOYS TO CRACK. By the Rev. John Todd, D.D., Author of "Simple Sketches," "The Student's Guide," &c. Royal 18mo. Price 1s. 6d.
- THE STORY OF LITTLE ROBINSON OF PARIS; or, The Triumph of Industry. Translated from the French by Lucy Landon, Illustrated. Foolscap 8vo, cloth. Price 2s.
- THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON; or, Adventures of a Father and his Four Sons on a Desolate Island. With Twenty Engravings. Foolscap 8vo, cloth. Price 2s. 6d.
- ROBINSON CRUSOE. With Twenty-two Illustrations. Foolscap 8vo, cloth. Price 2s. 6d.

T. NELSON AND SONS, LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK.

BOOKS OF PRECEPT AND EXAMPLE.

- LIVES MADE SUBLIME BY FAITH AND WORKS. By the Rev. ROBERT STREE, D.D., Author of "Doing Good," &c. Post 8vo, cloth. Price 2s. 6d.
- DOING GOOD; or, The Christian in Walks of Usefulness.

 Illustrated by Examples. By the Rev. ROBERT STEEL, D.D. Post 8vo, cloth extra. Gilt edges. Price 3s. 6d.
- WILLING HEARTS AND READY HANDS; or, The Labours and Triumphs of Earnest Women. By Joseph Johnson. Post 8vo, cloth extra. Price 8s. 6d.
- THE THRESHOLD OF LIFE. A Book of Illustrations and Lessons for the Encouragement and Counsel of Youth. By W. H. DAVENPORT ADAMS. With Six Engravings. Post Svo, cloth. Price 2s. 6d.
- SEED-TIME AND HARVEST; or, Sow Well and Reap Well. A Book for the Young. By the late Rev. W. K. TWEEDIS, D.D. Post Svo, cloth. Price 2s. 6d.
- SUCCESS IN LIFE. A Book for Young Men. Post 8vo, cloth extra.
 Price 3s.
- THE BOY MAKES THE MAN. A Book of Example and Encouragement for Boys. With Coloured Frontispiece, and numerous Engravings. Royal 18mo, cloth. Price 1s. 6d.

STORIES OF NOBLE LIVES.

EACH WITH COLOURED FRONTISPIECE.

Royal 18mo, cloth. Price 1s.

STORY OF AUDUBON, the Naturalist.

STORY OF HOWARD, the Philanthropist.

STORY OF PALISSY, the Potter.

STORY OF JOHN SMEATON and the Eddystone Lighthouse.

STORY OF DR. SCORESBY, the Arctic Navigator.

STORY OF CYRUS FIELD, the Projector of the Atlantic Cable.

STORY OF BENVENUTO CELLINI, the Italian Goldsmith, STORY OF SIR HUMPHREY DAVY and the Invention of the Safety Lamp.

STORY OF GALILEO, the Astronomer of Pisa.

STORY OF THE HERSCHELS.

STORY OF THE STEPHENSONS, Father and Son.

STORY OF SAMUEL BUDGETT, the Successful Merchant.

T. NELSON AND SONS, LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK.

NEW SERIES OF PRIZE BOOKS.

- THE EUPHRATES AND THE TIGRIS. A Narrative of Discovery and Adventure. With a Description of the Ruins of Babylon and Nineveh. With Eighteen Full-page Illustrations. Post 8vo, cloth extra. Price 2s.
- MOUNT SINAI, PETRA, AND THE DESERT. Described and Illustrated. With Twenty-three Full-page Illustrations. Post 8vo, cloth extra. Price 2s.
- THE JORDAN AND ITS VALLEY, AND THE DEAD SEA. By the Author of "The Mediterranean Illustrated." Forty-five Engravings. Price 2s.
- THE STORY OF IDA PFEIFFER AND HER TRAVELS
 IN MANY LANDS. With Twenty-five Full-page Engravings. Post
 8vo, cloth extra. Price 2s.
- THE STORY OF THE LIFE AND TRAVELS OF ALEX-ANDER VON HUMBOLDT. With Twenty-seven Full-page Engravings. Post 8vo, cloth extra. Price 2s.
- THE AMAZON AND ITS WONDERS. With Illustrations of Animal and Vegetable Life in the Amazonian Forest. With Twenty-six Fullpage Engravings. Post 8vo, cloth extra. Price 2s.
- IN THE FAR EAST. A Narrative of Exploration and Adventure in Cochin-China, Cambodia, Laos, and Siam. With Twenty-eight Full-page Engravings. Post 8vo, cloth extra. Price 2s.
- GJBRALTAR AND ITS SIEGES. With a Description of its Natural Features. With Eighteen Full-page Illustrations. Post 8vo, cloth extra. Price 2s.

TEMPERANCE TALES.

FIRST PRIZE TEMPERANCE TALE, 1879.

- SOUGHT AND SAVED. A Tale. By Miss M. A. Paull, Author of "Tim's Troubles; or, Tried and True," "The Vivians of Woodiford," &c. With Six Engravings. Post 8vo, cloth extra. Price 3s. 6d.
 - *** To this Tale was awarded the First Prize (£100) offered by the United Kingdom Band of Hope Union.

SECOND PRIZE TEMPERANCE TALE, 1879.

- LIONEL FRANKLIN'S VICTORY, By E. VAN SOMMER. With Six Engravings. Post 8vo, cloth extra. Price 3s. 6d.
 - * This Tale secured the SECOND PRIZE (£50).
- FRANK OLDFIELD; or, Lost and Found. By the Rev. T. P. Wilson, M.A. With Five Engravings. Post 8vo, cloth. Price 3s. 6d.
- TIM'S TROUBLES; or, Tried and True. By M. A. PAULL. With Five Engravings. Post 8vo, cloth. Price 3s. 6d.
- TRUE TO HIS COLOURS; or, The Life that Wears Best. By the Rev T P WILSON, M.A., Vicar of Pavenham, Author of "Frank Oldfield; or, Lost and Found." Illustrated. Post 8vo, cloth. Price 3s. 6d.
 - T. NELSON AND SONS, LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK.



